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THE GIFT OF

EDWARD HALE GREENLEAF

Edward H. Greenleaf

THE DEEP THINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION

OF

THE REV. GEORGE PUTNAM,

AS COLLEAGUE PASTOR WITH

REV. ELIPHALET PORTER, D. D.

OVER THE

FIRST CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN ROXBURY,

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DISCOURSE.

1 CORINTHIANS II. 10.

FOR THE SPIRIT SEARCHETH ALL THINGS, YEA, THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD.

In these words Paul characterizes his view of Christianity, and distinguishes it from that of the Jewish teachers. They could not understand the gospel; it was a 'wisdom which none of them knew,' because their minds were pre-occupied with worldly ideas of the Messiah's advent and reign. 'Had they known,' says the apostle, 'they would not have crucified him.' That apostle had received a communication of the truth from heaven. Amidst a light above the brightness of the sun, the scales of Jewish prejudice had fallen from his eyes. The despised and crucified Jesus had been manifested to him as the Lord of glory. Amidst that light, and by the aid of subsequent communications, he had seen the deep things of God in the gospel. It had become in his estimation the very wisdom of God; his brightest manifestation. As it is written, says he, quoting a passage from Isaiah, 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' And then, not referring this disclosure to a future life, as I should judge from the usual manner of quoting these words is now done, he adds, 'but God hath revealed them to

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us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.' Heaven is, indeed, brought down to earth in the experience of those who feel the power of the gospel.

But what is this experience, of which it is said, that the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor the worldly heart conceived it? What is this experience, which is described as a knowledge of the deep things of God? It is the experience not of philosophers as such, not of mystery, not of votaries, but simply of *them that love God.* The glories of religion are its virtues. The depths of religion are its affections. The chief thing in religion is not doctrine, but devotion. The very truths of religion — what do we mean by them, but intellectual, inward, heart-felt perceptions? Whence do we originally derive those perceptions — the very ideas of goodness, of mercy, of spiritual glory, of God himself — whence, in philosophical strictness, do we originally derive those perceptions, but from the experience of our own hearts? They are brightened, indeed, by communications from without, by doctrines, by teachings; but they are never brightened without the inward endeavor, and growing conformity of our own minds.

But on this ground I now proceed another step; and I say, not only that the chief things in religion are its affections; but that its true affections are deep, that they are justly described, by the figure in our text, as the deep things of God. And they possess too the characters appropriate to that description. They are, in proportion to their depth, calm, silent, meditative, powerful, and in their utmost depths, they possess the full consciousness of being unutterable. The sound of words, the motions of gesture, the heaving bosom, and the flashing eye, can no more tell what they are, than the swelling wave or the ripple on the sea-shore can tell what are the fathomless abysses of the ocean.

In the passage on which I have been commenting, the apostle calls the gospel, thus realized in the heart, 'the wisdom of God in a mystery:' he calls it 'the hidden wisdom.' It had been hidden in ages past, from the worldly eye, and the worldly heart, hidden from Gentile wisdom and Jewish formality, and from

human pride in all its forms, whether of admiration for outward splendor, or of confidence in recondite and mystical philosophy — hidden, not because it was in itself mysterious or unintelligible, but precisely because it was simple and spiritual. This I understand to be Paul's account of the reasons why the world was not, in his time, and all along had not been, prepared to receive the gospel. The simplicity of moral refinement is the last stage in the progress of the human mind. The great truths, the deep things of Christianity, were too singly and purely spiritual for barbarous ages, for mystical systems, for formal devotions, and speculative sectarians. This is the account to be given of the difficulties that were in the way of the ancient world. And I must venture upon the remark, that similar obstacles, since the apostle's day, have been opposed to the reception, shall I not say to the recognition, of the deep things of Christianity — to the reception, as supreme, of those simple verities which have their being and beatitude in the heart. Imposing rituals and conflicting creeds have kept men from giving that first place to the simple love of God and man, which was originally ascribed to them by the Master of Christians. Popery introduced a religion of forms; — that was not the spirit. Protestantism, a religion of doctrines;— still it was not the spirit. It remains for another, a final reformation, to establish a religion of experience; a religion of deep feeling, mingled with deep discrimination of that feeling. Of this last era, many harbingers have already appeared in the Christian world. They may be discovered in the powerful and extended religious excitements of our times, in the great and manifold enterprises of christian zeal and benevolence, and in that awakened interest in religious subjects, which marks the present period as the great religious age of the world. There is religious feeling abroad among civilized communities, such, I believe, as was never before witnessed among them; and it is to be hoped that discrimination is to come — that intellect is to be so mingled with the fermenting process of feeling, as to bring it to the great result — a true, deep, religious virtue.

The place which I have given to this simple and spiritual virtue as supreme and ultimate, I shall now undertake to vindicate for it. There is some call for this effort in the yet prevailing sentiments of the world on this subject. We hear much of some religious systems as shallow and superficial, and of others that claim to be deep and powerful; and on subjects of such general interest, it is desirable to discriminate.

I say, then, that the deep things of religion are its intelligent affections. And rightly to teach the obligation, the sanctity and the blessedness of these affections, to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, to carry the work of conscience farther and farther into the inmost recesses of the soul, to extend and multiply its applications to every sphere and every action of human life; to show, at the same time, what intimacy virtue and piety hold with all human welfare, and what essential blighting, war, and desolation wait on every departure from them, to show, in other words, the great interest and the great evil, in their true light; to bring the human mind into a holy and blessed sympathy with the mind that was in Christ, to lead it to a sacred, delightful, and habitual communion with God — these are the deep things of preaching.

How deep, then, are the simplest virtues of Christianity — for I would first illustrate the abstract and absolute proposition — how deep are the simplest virtues of Christianity; distinguished as they are in this respect from the virtues of all other religions, and from all the systems of conventional and worldly morality.

The man who has brought his conscience under the dominion of Christian principles, will find that many things which to others are matters of indifference, to him are matters of duty, and that many words, which in the world's dialect describe only a decent behaviour, in the record of his conscience, describe deep obligations. Such words are alms-giving, temperance, social courtesy, public worship, the hallowing the sabbath; and with not a few, even the words honesty, truth-telling, and the legal oath, especially that of the Custom-House, fall under the same de-

scription. With multitudes, many of these things are mere matters of form, heartless homages to public opinion, or selfish calculations of private interest; but to the man who bears a Christian conscience with him, they are things in which his heart is interested — they are testimonies of sacred reverence to principle. To him, honesty is not policy, but obligation; truth-telling is not fear, but principle; and the legal oath is not a slight form, but a solemn appeal to heaven. To him, alms-giving is not a reckless impulse or a conformity with custom; temperance is not just so much apparent abstinence as public opinion imposes; social courtesy is not a compulsory and heartless civility; public worship is not a respectful attitude; and hallowing the sabbath not a superstitious and stupid reverence for hours and minutes, or for the sun that shines on that day. I have seen men devoid of all religious principle and affection, as full of this traditional reverence as any others. While a good man, doubly free in thought, and yet doubly strict in conscience, cheerful in countenance and not constrained in manners, welcomes the day with a simple desire and determination to use its opportunities, just as he would use all other opportunities, for his religious improvement.

So it is in all things. That humble and often despised word, virtue — the thing itself an obstacle to grace in the account of some, the form of outward actions with others — but to a reflecting and conscientious man how much does that word mean! What a deep struggle does he often find that it requires to live virtuously, to resist, not to say the grossest passions, yet those passions whose gratifications deserve the name of vice, if they do not bear it? With Paul, to 'keep the body under,' even in the matter of the amount and quality of food, is a virtue which many men called Christians, nay, many *called* eminent Christians, have not learned to practice. The surface of virtue is decency, but decency is only the surface. The principles within that sustain it, are strong effort, and rigid self-denial, and sleepless vigilance. Nay, and with many the surface could not be kept unbroken without a firm and deep foundation beneath.

It is a hard matter with many to live decently; to say no violent words, and commit no violent acts, to be always considerate and reasonable in behaviour, to spread the restraints of calm reflection over every strong and out-breaking impulse.

To bring one further instance, which, though it be the highest, is nevertheless one of the most familiar, accredited, and I had almost said commonplace, in the system of Christianity—I speak of that affection to which, as I have before said, Paul refers as the great qualification for understanding the gospel,—the love of God. All, indeed, will acknowledge it to be a deep affection; but it may be that few, if any of us know, what profound disclosures, what bright revelations it might afford us of the deep things of truth, and of the gospel; what high and sacred improvement it might minister to all our faculties, what a transcendent joy to our affections, what a new creation it might spread around us, and within us, what a sustaining and satisfying good it might be to us, beyond — oh! infinitely beyond all that the eye hath seen, or the ear heard, or the earthly heart conceived! Nay, and I fear that we fail of this partly because the affection of love to God holds such a conceded and familiar place in our system; that we make no discovery of its depth and power, precisely because it is accounted so simple and obvious, just as we pass over those wonders of the creation which lie in our daily path; that we ask not for the great revelations of this central light because like the sun, it holds so visible and conspicuous a place in our moral system; that we fail, in fact, to make this principle the greatest of all, precisely because we are always so readily and easily admitting it to be the greatest. This is no anomaly in the human mind; but a fact of many and wide applications. The very foundation of moral truth and excellence for a long time failed to be discovered, because it lay in simple consciousness. And many of those things which we the least believe and realize, are things that we constantly, unhesitatingly, and therefore passively admit. And many of the subjects that we most need to reason about, to develope, illustrate, and place in new lights, are the very subjects that are so familiar as never to suggest a doubt whether we understand them.

It therefore needs to be said with some emphasis that 'the *first* and *great* commandment is,—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' The comprehension of moral excellence is our chief distinction as human beings; for animals reason. And the love of the Supreme Excellence is the highest measure of that distinction. It is that love, I am persuaded, that is yet to do more for the improvement, the virtue and happiness of the world, than has yet been conceived. It is prayer, it is communion with that great Being, that is to enlighten, strengthen, ennoble and bless us, beyond all earthly thought and imagination. And of all subjects that come within the range of the human understanding, it is not science, it is not nature, it is not the mind of man, it is not angelic glory, but it is the perfection of God, that should draw forth our most earnest desires, our deepest meditations, our profoundest inquiries. How do we admire and love some of those beings, the wise, the holy, the almost angelic—some of those beings, whom God has made even on earth! The greeting, the welcome, the lifted voice of a great people to its noble patriots, defenders, benefactors, and philanthropists, presents to us one of the most moving scenes in the world. Our own individual admiration for them is one of the most glorious exercises of our affections. To understand great minds is one of the loftiest exertions of our own minds. What then shall it be to rise towards a comprehension of the All-wise, the All-perfect, the Infinite? The expectation of that growing knowledge is the great hope of immortality!

Nay, more; the conception which a man entertains of the moral perfection of God is the deepest test of his character. Because he ascribes to God all the perfections of which he can conceive. That is his very idea of God—all conceivable excellence, extended to infinity. But his moral conceptions necessarily arise from his own experience, and are therefore a test of it. No bad man, in a bad state of his mind, has lofty moral ideas of God. He may use lofty words, he may have a blind awe; but he has no clear and high conceptions of the moral beauty of the

divine character, and that mournful deficiency is one of the penalties that follow transgression. And the degrees of piety, I believe, may be graduated by the same test. I know of no more marked difference among pious men, than in the veiws they entertain of God's love. Tell me what a Christian thinks, not of doctrines, not of the decrees, not of election, but what he thinks of the love of God, and I will tell you what is the measure of his piety. The same remark, on a careful analysis, will be found, I believe, to apply to communities. Tell us concerning any barbarous, pagan nations, what their gods are, and we can tell what are the degrees of moral improvement among them. Tell us, too, concerning the Christian ages, and concerning the Christian sects, what are their ideas of God, and we can safely and confidently speak to the same point with regard to them. Wherever are found, prevailing and uncontradicted, ideas of God that impeach his moral perfections, there and in that proportion, will be discovered a great obtuseness of moral feeling among the people. It must be so; for their feelings will not rise above their standard; nay, their feelings, so far as they are free at least, furnish the standard.

It would be interesting to trace the history of the Christian church by this light. But my design, at present, is only to show, that the affections of Christianity, the love of God and all its virtues, are not barely the simple and obvious matters which they are commonly taken to be; but that they go far into the entire interests, the very nature and true history of the mind; that they are indeed the deep things of God and the gospel.

Thus far, this point has been stated abstractly and absolutely. We have considered the simple and intrinsic nature of these affections.

Let us now observe, in the second place, that the virtues of Christianity require for their improvement much and deep reflection. They are not simple affections; they are not mere feelings; they do not leave the mind unemployed; they do not supersede or set it aside: they demand, for their perfection, the highest intellectual discrimination.

There is a voice of conscience in the soul; but virtue does not consist in simply listening to it, or in passively yielding to its direction. So far, indeed, is well, in the moral course; and well were it if men were led more than they are, to give heed to that voice within. But it is to be interpreted, to be understood, to be carefully distinguished from all other directions; and all this requires reflection, self-distrust, and patient discrimination. That voice is indeed to be listened to in the deepest silence of the soul; but in that listening, there is the most profound and fixed attention. There is a voice, too, in the scriptures; but that voice again, and in like manner, is to be interpreted; and how much care that interpretation requires, the history of creeds and sects sufficiently shows. Or, to make the statement more accurate, there is a moral element in our nature; and it is an element to be wrought upon. It is sure to be developed in some form, by education, by the agencies of reason, and the instructions of scripture; but whether it is developed in the best form, must depend on our own care and attention. It is—that is to say, conscience, though not formed, is modified by circumstances; and those circumstances are so various, so complicated, and often unpropitious, and there are besides so many disturbing passions within, that nothing but vigilant care, and patient reasoning, can guide the moral principle to its highest purity and elevation. God has given us a capacity for religion, but he has given it to be improved. He has placed within us the elements of virtue; but he has placed them there to be wrought by us into perfection.

Feeling about religion is not religion. The very emotion of the persecutor, the bigot, the fanatic, and the votary of forms, is a feeling about religion. Many persons have very strong religious feelings, which yet depend on considerations that are exceedingly superficial. And these feelings show that they are upon the surface—show that they have no depth, by their constant fluctuation. It is reflection that is wanted to give them thoroughness and stability; to give them the character of true Christian affections.

Virtue, in fine—and let that word now stand for all Christian excellence—virtue is a perpetual struggle to think, to feel, to act rightly; it is a constant effort of our whole spiritual nature, and not least of the intellectual part. Take, for instance, one of the calmest of the virtues, and one, as many will think, of the most negative—I mean the virtue of Christian moderation. None, perhaps, is more wanted at this day, though none is held in less repute. And I say that none requires more clear and discriminating reflection. How easy would it be—what an abandonment, in fact, of all mental discipline,—to throw ourselves into any one of the currents of opinion or feeling that are now sweeping through the Christian world; how easy to be borne along with it, and without an effort, to take our place among those who are conspicuous for zeal or orthodoxy. How easy to be a Methodist, or a Baptist, a Congregationalist, or an Episcopalian, in the technical sense of these terms, and how easy to be zealous for matters like these. How comparatively easy to act the part of the elder reformers, to make a palpable stand and division, on some point of church government or order, or of ecclesiastical subjection, as at the Protestant Reformation; or to put on a visible costume, as some sects have done; or, that which answers as well, to mark out a certain line of conduct, to adopt some mode of fanatical excess,—how easy a matter would it be! This is not what is required of us. No, but it is the far harder task of defending the medium, the right, the reasonable—of being strict without singularity, and zealous without excess, and rational without coldness; it is not to go off into some violent extreme, but to hold the mind in the balance between extremes and excesses: it is, while all sorts of extravagant things are said by all sorts of persons, and while the rage and passion of many are for something striking and emphatic, to say the thing that is strictly just and simply correct, to task the very soul to that endeavor, to be true and reasonable,—to control all wayward imaginations, to restrain all headlong impulses, to check all hasty words, though they have sprung to our very lips, to be calm and earnest, and courageous and meek, and

solemn and cheerful, and decided and forbearing—this is what is required of us; and this is the poor, dull virtue of moderation!

But I must hasten to say, in the third place, that the simple affections, the simple moralities of the gospel are deep things, in preference and in contrast to many things for which this distinction is often claimed.

To most persons, if the question were put, What are the deep things of the gospel of Christ?—the reference that would arise in their minds would immediately be to its speculative doctrines. Metaphysical systems of theology, certain views of election, and of the atonement would be pointed to, as being the depths of Christianity. These are the *deep things of men*—but not, as I apprehend, in the apostle's sense, 'the deep things of God.'

What is a doctrine? It is some view of God's character, government, providence, or grace, or it is some view of man's nature, necessities, or prospects. Now it is obvious that this view, so long as it rests in mere and cold speculation, has no strong hold on the mind, and no deep foundation in it. That which makes a doctrine deep is the fervent admiration, the profound earnestness with which it is embraced; and these are qualities of the heart.

That 'wisdom of the world by which it knew not God'—the Grecian philosophy—was much of it profound speculation. That learning of the princes of this world, the Jewish rabbins, which prevented them from perceiving the 'hidden wisdom' of the cross, was much of it profound allegory, and more profound mysticism.

The essence, the peculiarity of the Christian system lies in that character of emotion, thorough, profound, influential, habitual emotion which it requires. Speculation must become feeling, in order to be the wisdom of the gospel. Doctrines must become affections, in order to be the 'deep things of God.'

Nor yet is this emotion deep, however strong it may be, unless it is calm, fixed, and abiding. Nothing can be deep in the soul but what is true and reasonable; nothing can abide, and be eternal in human nature, but what is accordant with its reason, with its intellect. Violent excitements in religion, tumults of the soul, powerful impressions on the imagination are not—whatever else may be thought of them—are not deep things.

They may belong to a series of deep emotions; but they do not themselves bear any peculiar indications of depth. They show the marks rather of being shallow and superficial. They change, they fluctuate, they pass away. I am persuaded that in the most extravagant sects, and in their most extravagant excitements, though the shallow courtesy, the slight and dull experience of the Christian world has called *them* the men of zeal and feeling,—yet that in the most extravagant excitements, and in the most extravagant men, there is a singular want of depth and reality of feeling; it is wild, physical impulse, not deep intellectual feeling. You have all seen, perhaps, one of our summer freshets. A sudden and sweeping flood is before you. The wrecks of human labor and of nature's productions are borne along in wild confusion. Mingled curiosity and concern are depicted in the countenances of those around you. Here and there perhaps a human dwelling is swept away, and its inmates are seen struggling in the fierce torrent. To-day all is tumult and agitation; but to-morrow you look, and the flood has passed away. Was that the deep sea? Or is it a proper emblem of the depths of human feeling?

It has become common, as I have just implied, to remark, that there is the most fervor among the most ignorant classes of religionists. But if by this it be meant, that there is the most of real and permanent feeling, I utterly deny the truth of the proposition, and I consider religion as dishonored by it. There may be more of occasional, local, temporary feeling—the feeling of religious seasons and circumstances. But of deep and abiding emotion, the most is undoubtedly to be found among the most intelligent, reflecting and sober Christians. I have not a doubt, if the truth could be known, and I have heard some testimony to this effect, that among the wildest and most extravagant, and, as the world calls them, the most zealous sectarians, there are more misgivings, more speculative doubts, more doubts of the truth and reality of religion, than among any other religious persons whatever. Minds in this condition are shaken by that very reason which was given to strengthen them; and the remonstrances of that better sense against the excesses of fanati-

cism, or the cruelty of uncharitableness, are often so strong as to pass for the assaults of Satan. The powers of the soul, the affections of the heart, instead of settling down into one strong conviction and feeling, are a set of warring faculties—so distinct that it really seems to the subject of this experience as if there were actually within him, God's spirit inspiring him on the one hand, and the evil One tempting him on the other. Religion, in fact, instead of being a part of the very soul, has only made a temporary and precarious lodgment in the soul, from which it is every hour or day cast out, and to which it as often returns, again to experience the fate of change, irregularity, and comparative imbecility. And indeed, unless the soul is a confused mass of incoherent thoughts, feelings, sensations and fancies, there *can* be no thorough and consistent devotedness and fervor in it, without reflection and sobriety. There may be wayward impulses, and passionate imaginings, but the really powerful emotion is the powerful conviction—the conviction which from its very power has *become* an emotion, but which by its very *power*, too, is preserved from fanaticism. Far be it from me to say that the ignorant and unlearned may not, and do not often entertain this thorough feeling. They may possess the truest wisdom. Their minds may be active and rational, though not filled with the knowledge of books. Their feelings may be based on sober conviction, and therefore may be genuine and lasting. But extravagance and fanaticism are *not* of this character, nor do they help any one to form this character.

I should not fulfil my intention, in saying what I have thus far said, (whether with or without reference to the present occasion,) if I did not add a few words on the practical importance of the views, perhaps, very obvious ones, which I have now presented. It has not been my purpose to amuse you with a desultory or even a dexterous commentary, on that figurative description of religion which is contained in our text. I believe that the right interpretation of it does go deep into the whole subject of religion, of morals, and moral culture.

It is not difficult to see that so long as anything besides vital religion arrogates the merit of being profound, of being the deeper part of the subject, the attention of Christians, so far as that influence goes, will be diverted from the interior, ultimate, and all-comprehending interest. They will be liable to think more of doctrines or of ordinances, or of forms or professions, or general excitements, or public enterprises—more of all these and less of their own hearts. The mind naturally asks for the great things; and if there be any greater things than the simple affections of virtue and piety, it will seek for them.

And, what is still more to be regretted perhaps, practical men, as they call themselves, will have no proper comprehension of the province in which they have to labor. Practical men, if they fall into this popular error, will be superficial men. Simple Christians, as some boast themselves to be, may acquire an unexpected claim to that title. With the prevailing veiws of what is practical in religion, men are apt to think that every thing in that department is obvious, plain, and easy to be understood; that there is no difficulty, no obscurity, no liability to mistake; that they have nothing to do but to read the precept as it is written, to take the dictate of conscience as it is offered; that they have nothing to learn, and therefore nothing to study. Indeed, the boasted practical spirit of the age is far enough as yet from being a deep spirit, though as I trust, it is becoming deeper in its progress.

Then, as to preaching the deep things of the gospel, if the views which I have offered are correct, they will help us to form some conception of what it is.

Preaching the truths of religion in general terms is not preaching deeply. Preaching generally about sin, and virtue, and righteousness, about duty and danger, about heaven and hell, is not preaching deeply. Let the language employed upon these subjects be ever so strong, if it is general, it leaves the hearer indifferent, or at most only astounded at the representation, but never penetrated and pierced in heart; it is not deep preaching. The great evil of men's thoughts about all these things is, that they are general.

It is the very business of the preacher to make them specific; to give a point, and an edge to those things, which all men handle, and scarcely any body feels—which all men handle as if they were the most harmless, and the most useless things in the world.

Preaching to the imagination is not preaching deeply. Let us distinguish. Preaching to the heart *through* the imagination, may be deep instruction. Preaching *from* the imagination is instructing wisely; the importance of its aid can scarcely be overrated. It makes much of the difference which gives to some preachers the power and interest that attend them. There is scarcely anything more wanted in our pulpits than illustration. But preaching *to* the imagination is a different thing. If any one addresses himself to that faculty chiefly, if all truth passes before the eyes of his hearers in pictures of the fancy, though they be the most beautiful pictures, if he kindles up the highest fervors of imagination, and leaves it there, no sounding brass, nor tinkling cymbal, could be more hollow and useless. Nor will the darkest and most terrific images any more avail, without some other power, to penetrate the soil of the human heart. They will but spread shadows over the field which it is the office of religion to cultivate.

Preaching much in technical language and a cant tone, is not likely to be deep preaching. If ever this holy function is clothed with its proper energy, if ever moral power is enthroned in the pulpit as it may be, if ever the feet of them that preach glad tidings are beautiful upon the mountains—that function will not be a form, that dominion will not be a bondage to rules, those footsteps will not be clogged with ignoble fetters. The stranger that should loiter around our walls will not know, as soon as he comes within the sound of our voice, that *that* is preaching. And if he will enter in, he will find that it is not a sermon merely that demands his reverent attention, but that powerful truth, freely put forth, has laid its grasp upon his mind; that no countenance dressed with sanctimony is upon him, but one that look-

eth into the heart; that the voice which expostulates with him is as the voice of his friend at the fireside; and these things shall enter into his heart with a reality, that shall make him feel that it is no dull preaching, but demonstration of the spirit and power that are dealing with him.

Deep preaching, my brethren, must be like that of our Saviour, moral and practical. And there is nothing more false, in my judgment, than the common ideas of this practical, moral preaching. It is considered as a dull repetition of trite and commonplace thoughts about duty, virtue, &c. 'To be good, to be good,' is thought to be the amount of it. There is nothing, in fact, that requires so much discrimination as the moral precepts that we deliver; and they receive far too little of it. The hearer does not feel partly because the matter is so loosely stated, that he does not know what to feel, or because it is so extravagantly stated, that he cannot feel it. And many sermons, too, which have a definite subject, have no definite and deep moral aim; all is general, if not vague, superficial if not false, and useless, if not dull. And with the body of the clergy—I must state the fact, and cannot be answerable for the construction that may be put upon my doing so—with the body of the clergy in this country, doctrines occupy, I do not say all their attention, but almost all their powers of discrimination. To make distinctions and modifications of certain doctrines, to defend them, and any way to sustain them in the public mind, calls forth, and it evidently requires a prodigious expense, not to say, mispense of talent. And when the descent is made from doctrines to precepts, it seems to be thought that there is no farther occasion for acumen, and the whole effort commonly resolves itself into an effort for impression. Indeed the profound study of Christian morals, the careful distinction of moral and spiritual affections one from another, and of the principles and considerations applicable to each, their uses to the improvement and happiness of the mind, and then, the application of them all to the whole scene of human life, to government, to legislation, to litigation,

to suffrage, to the common weal, to labor, to business, to domestic life, to society, to recreation—this extended view has certainly not yet been taken of the business of preaching.

There is a call, then, for deep preaching; and it is meet that people and preachers should know it. There is a call, not only in circumstances, in prevailing defects, but in the deep nature and ever-during wants of the human soul.

He that preaches to the human conscience, must preach deeply. There are awful depths within it, and it is the tone of no factitious eloquence that must reach them. No well dressed harangue, no well balanced periods, no voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely, will do this, but the voice that is thus to penetrate the soul, and commune with conscience, must be embodied truth, wisdom, sobriety, power—and more than all, experience. He who deals with the conscience, must do it as one who has experience, who has communed with it in the depth and silence of his own heart, who has felt how awful and sovereign is that power, and will hold no compromise with a lax and worldly morality, that speaks of conscience as a common thing, and resigns it to such fate as the claims of courtesy or the exigencies of trade will give it.

He who preaches concerning sin, must preach deeply. It is the deep and deadly curse, the calamity to which all other evils are slight in comparison, the darkness in the soul which no shade of earthly misfortune can essentially deepen. It is more than calamity; it is guilt—it is wrong done to ourselves and to the goodness of our Maker. I speak not now of necessary imperfection, but of voluntary and cherished offences. I know, indeed, that it is possible to use general language unjustifiably strong on this subject, and to make extravagant representations. But he, who should go to the depths of this evil, unfold it fully, and show what it is, show how it blights every glorious faculty, and blessed affection, show what mournful desolation it spreads through the soul, and the infinite loss which it entails on an immortal nature,—he who should speak as one who had felt in the

grief of his own breast, how evil and bitter a thing it is, would make an impression to which no general phrases of theological extravagance could add a deeper horror.

There is a species of discourses, sometimes called fine discourses, containing beautiful representations of virtue, or moving pictures of life and providence, which soften and elevate the mind, and fill it with a temporary enthusiasm. And these in their place are well; for we must bring from our treasure things new and old, and touch as we can all the springs of the soul. But he who deals with the human heart, must do more than this. He must go deeper. He must come to a closer and stronger grapple with the affections. He must oftentimes strike home, and strike hard, or he will make no strong or durable impression.

That preaching which always excites men, and especially that which excites them to a delightful enthusiasm, though it is excellent in its way, and though it is indeed much needed, yet is not, I fear, the deepest preaching. I have an idea of preaching, and it is one which I should desire above all things to exemplify, which goes far beyond all this. It is a simple and holy faithfulness, it is a discriminating and uncompromising appeal to men's duties and faults, it is placing the finger on the very points on which their consciences are daily exercised, it is going down into the very midst of the conflicts of life and of the trials of virtue, and unfolding the very questionings of the heart with itself, and familiarly talking with our hearers of those things which they are every day thinking and doing — in fine, it is a holy calmness of expostulation, and an awful sobriety of instruction like that of Jesus. This might not be the most delightful preaching, and it might not be thought the most eloquent, but it would be the most useful, and the most effective. It would not send away the hearers with the voice of eulogy upon their lips, but with the silent and solemn conviction of truth in their hearts.

And that scene in which human hearts have their lot, and that mighty interest which they embosom, require the same treat-

ment. I know not how it may seem to you, my brethren, but he who preaches to me of human life, must preach deeply. It is no superficial scene, though many of its aspects are such. Its wants do not all lie on the surface. Its most powerful conflicts are not with poverty, or pain, but with inward anxiety, dissatisfaction, fear and trouble. He who preaches upon life, must penetrate, dissect, analyze, — and find the secret, and sorrowing or rejoicing spirit of it. He must carry his thoughts into its most retired scenes and affections. He must understand many states of mind, and deliver many messages, and yet all these messages must be distinct and appropriate, and such as only intimacy with the case can deliver.

The argument, indeed, which human life, taken in connexion with the faculties and wants of the mind — the argument, I say, which it furnishes in favor of religion, in favor of the Christian religion, and of a deep and vital interest in it, is a fruitful subject, yet, as I venture to think, more fully to be developed. Life is a preacher, if we could learn to give an interpretation to it, more powerful than any human voice. The truth is, without any reference to miracles, or to the external evidences in favor of our religion, that some such reliance is necessary. The mind, conscious of its situation and of its wants, could not *live* in any comfort or strength without it.

Once more, he who preaches to human interests must preach deeply. What they are is by no means, as yet, fully understood. There is no practical appreciation, among the mass of men, of their real interests. There is a prevailing delusion and blindness upon this matter. If men would seek the real interests of their minds and hearts with but half the zeal that they give to visible acquisitions, there would be witnessed a change in the world such as the progress of ages now cannot make. He who treats of this theme must go deeply into the human heart. He must show that every man bears within him a world of interests, to which the outward world is but a vanishing shadow. This would be the spirituality and power of the Gospel. Men would

begin to act for the soul's welfare, as they have acted for the body's gratification, and the world's applause. It would be life from the dead — to our words, to our thoughts, to our preaching, to our practice, life from the dead.

Finally, he who preaches Christ, must preach deeply. He must preach Christ crucified, the passion, the patience, the fortitude, the gracious interposition, the peace-speaking blood, the all-subduing example of Jesus Christ. He must preach deep repentance, deep humility, deep submission to God, — yes, and deep reliance, resolution, joy, and peace. Many other things may interest him, but beneath all other interests, beneath all other purposes, deeper than all, dearer than all, must be the purposes, the meditations, the prayers, the tender sympathies, the blessed aims and hopes that belong to this holy ministry.

Brethren of this religious Society,—I rejoice with you and with Him who has walked among you many days in the holy office of the ministry, in your past prosperity. I rejoice with you and with our young Brother, in your present prospects. I rejoice with him, that the labors of his youth are to be united with the wisdom of experience. May he preach to you the deep things of the gospel of Christ. May you be grounded and built up in them, 'till you all come, the teachers and the taught, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM NEWELL.

My Friend and Brother,

In conformity to an ancient and expressive usage, founded on the example of the apostles, and adopted and handed down to us by our New England fathers, it is my pleasant office on this occasion to offer you, by the appropriate symbol, the fellowship of the assembled churches.

I need not repeat what has often been said at similar times, that by this act we do not pretend to confer any rights, to which you were not entitled without it; or to give any divine and indispensable sanction to the sacred connexion already formed between an independent society and the pastor of their choice. Nor, in thus formally receiving you to the privileges of christian fellowship, do we presume to lay you under any obligation, express or implied, that shall interfere with that perfect freedom of thought and of action, which belongs of right to every individual. 'For we have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.' In joining hands with you, we do not enter into a compact for the support and propagation of any particular system of doctrine and discipline. We do not enlist you into the service of a party. We do not bind or expect you to march in the ranks of any theological army, under any sectarian chief, to any religious war.

Accept, then, my friend, and I rejoice to add, my brother, accept this Right Hand of Fellowship, which, in the name and on the behalf of the assembled churches, I now offer you in gladness and in love, as a simple token of cordial welcome to our christian brotherhood. By this symbol we invite you to the friendly acts and mutual courtesies of ministerial intercourse: we recognise you as our equal in office, our brother in the service of Christ, our fellow-laborer in the cause of truth and virtue, our fellow-warrior in the conquest of infidelity and sin. By this symbol we promise you all the aid and relief, all the counsel and co-operation, which you may need and which we can give; our assistance in your labors; our advice and encouragement in your perplexities; our fraternal sympathy in your trials; our joy in your success.

And you will remember, my brother, that while I have given you my hand, you have given me yours. The symbol and the promise are mutual. We may therefore expect in return the same offices of friendship and co-operation, which we have been pledging to you.

And now permit me, my friend, if I may be allowed, on this public occasion, an expression of private feeling, permit me to welcome you in my own name, and to utter the joyful greetings of my own tongue and heart, as you take the charge of this united christian flock and enter on your heaven-ward course, with the elder Shepherd at your side, in the pleasant places where your lot has fallen.

I bid you the glad welcome of personal friendship to the duties and pleasures, the honors and rewards of the christian ministry. That wearing toils and sore trials will also be ours there is no doubt. But what calling of mortal life is free from them? And if that on which we are entering have peculiar hardships and responsibilities, has it not also its peculiar privileges and satisfactions?

We are often called, it is true, to painful and affecting scenes. We must visit the couches of sickness and witness

its quick and fearful ravages, or its slow sad wastings. But we go not only to see, but to relieve suffering, not only to shed the tear of sympathy, but to wipe away the tear of sorrow. We must often enter the chamber of death. But we enter it with a message of immortal life, and with the words of Christ to the mourners, 'Your friend is not dead, but sleepeth.' We must often follow the funeral train to the open grave; the grave, perhaps, of the most loved and useful of the flock. But we go, the heralds of a resurrection, to take from that grave its victory, and to say with the angels at the tomb of Jesus, 'He is not here, he is risen.' We must watch and toil for the cause which we have espoused. But in our watchings and toils is there not a joy set before us? a crown over the cross? 'the luxury of doing good?' the promise, that 'they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever?' True, we can do far less than we wish for the good of men. But we can do something—and that little is glorious. And it were folly to be cast down because we have not angels' tongues or angels' wings; the rod of Moses or the speech of Aaron. If in the faithful use of the gift that *is* given us we can urge or lead a few souls only to duty and God, it is enough. The servant of the Lord may depart in peace.

Again, then, I bid you welcome, brother, to the *pleasures* of the christian ministry, which, if it have much to dishearten and oppress, has yet more to animate and cheer us. May it be your happiness to find it so, by the pleasant experience of many useful years: so that when your feet shall at length totter on the brink of the invisible world, you may look from a happy past to a happy future. May it be your blessedness—the blessedness of the aged and faithful pastor.

> 'Behold him in the even-tide of life,
> A life well-spent, whose early care it was
> His riper years should not upbraid his green.'

May thy labours, my brother, be crowned with the love of thy people. May the eye that sees thee bless thee, and the ear that hears thee bear witness to thee. And I utter the prayer not only of a christian brother, but of an affectionate friend, when I reverently invoke the Holy Spirit of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide and guard, to bless and sanctify thee in thy word and work. May he give thee grace to stir up the gift that is in thee. For

'God towards thee hath done his part, do thine.'

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BY MR PARKMAN, OF BOSTON.

The relation of a minister and people, which has now, agreeably to the received usages of our churches, been established, involves, like all other relations and privileges, reciprocal duties. While, therefore, brethren and friends of this christian society, we offer you our cordial congratulations on the events of this day, gratifying, as they are, to your hopes, you will permit us to remind you, that if they convey a privilege, they impose also an obligation. You have heard, already, of the duties of your pastor. Suffer, we pray you, the word of exhortation, while, with all simplicity, we speak to you of your own.

Behold, then, christian brethren, this man of your choice, and receive him with all gladness, as the servant of God, and as your servant for the gospel's sake. He comes hither at your call; which, by its favorable result, and that observation of events, which a true piety suggests, we are warranted in interpreting as the call of God's Providence. You have desired him for your spiritual teacher, pastor, and friend: and to share his labors with one, whom you have long known and honored in these sacred relations. The very terms, by which they are expressed, while they distinctly mark his duties, not obscurely intimate yours. For the relation, we have said, is reciprocal; and the benefit, it promises from him, implies an obligation on you.

1. He comes as your teacher. Receive, we pray you, the truth from his lips, and open your hearts, that it may

enlighten and sanctify you. It is *his* duty to preach to you that gospel, in the faith of which we stand. It is *yours*, to give to it your constant, patient, and serious hearing. This place of your solemnities will be the peculiar scene, and the sabbath, the stated season of his instructions. Come, then, my brethren, to this house with every returning sabbath, not only, as we will hope, in the multitude of God's mercies, but with a grateful joy; in a devout reverence and hearty love of this day, as the day of your blessing and hope; as the day, which the Lord hath made, and consecrated, by his goodness, to the best interests of man; to the nourishment of your souls, to the relief of your cares, to the solace of your sorrows, to the order of your families, to the repose and happiness of the world. A due regard for the sabbath and its ordinances will be the best security for your constant attendance on its services. A deep-rooted piety, far beyond a mere admiration of the preacher, or any subordinate considerations, will prevent your forsaking either the morning or the evening service. As in the days of your venerable fathers, of Eliot, of Danforth, and Adams, the afternoon will witness your faithful presence and your full assemblies. You will not suffer a little heat, or a little cold, a threatening cloud or a summer's sun, your noontide slumber, or any fancied claims of hospitality, nor yet the certain prospect of ministrations from other lips than those of your pastors, to detain you. For the feelings of your heart will be those of the devout worshipper of old; 'How amiable are thy tabernacles! I have loved, O Lord, the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.'

Your personal attachment to your pastor will, we doubt not, mingle itself with these devout affections, and become to him and to yourselves a source of grateful satisfaction. But allow me, brethren, to exhort you to be moderate, as of your expectations concerning him, so also of your early commendations of him. 'He, who flattereth his neighbor,' says the wise man, 'spreadeth a snare for his feet.' And he, who suffers in his youth, from extravagant hopes of what he *may do*, may expect

to suffer much more, as he advances, from unjust depreciations of what he *has done*. Do not, therefore, exalt him as your idol, lest, at the last, you humble him by your injustice. An enduring attachment to your minister will be best promoted,—not by anticipations, which no gifts or efforts of his, nay, not the gifts of a seraph, may satisfy; not by partialities, which, in exact proportion to their extravagance, will, assuredly, by the law of all excesses, end in indifference; not by that unreasonable fondness for him, which shall indispose you to receive the good services of others; but by a just and friendly estimate of his actual attainments and character; of what he is, and of what you see him desirous to be; that attachment, which will grow with his growth, and settle, with his advancing years and your experience of his worth, into a solid, respectful affection,—the proper reward of his fidelity, and the true bond of union between a pastor and his people.

I have spoken thus freely of the dangers of extravagant expectation and of extravagant praise, because it belongs to the ardor of our community, and is a natural fruit of the freshness of its institutions, to demand much from youth. But you will deem it reasonable to look to your pastor for his choicest fruits, not in the spring-time, but in the autumn of his days. You will accept his early services, not so much with rapture as if he had already attained—(for rapture, my brethren, belongs to angels rather than to men, to the spirits made perfect rather than to beings on trial, and is at best, on this side heaven, but a transient emotion)—as with candid minds and seriousness of heart. And to assist you in the charitable judgment, which the novelty of his duties may rightly claim, I will only advert to the obvious, but certainly not unimportant consideration, that it is the peculiarity of the ministerial profession, that the youngest of its members are initiated, with their first entrance upon it, into its most laborious and delicate offices: that while, in the other walks of professional employment, there is a gradual progress from the less to the more arduous; and only after long experience, is the physician or the lawyer

entrusted with a critical case;—the youngest minister is introduced, at once, to all the labors of his vocation; and from the very nature of its services, is called to teach and to preside, when, under a painful consciousness of inexperience, he would gladly seek for himself instruction.

2. But you have invited this our friend to become not only your teacher, but your pastor. You will welcome him, therefore, to your dwellings, and to the intimate scenes of your domestic retirement. As a true shepherd, he will come to you, not seeking dominion over your faith, but as watching for your souls. He will rejoice in your joys; and he will heartily sympathise in your sorrows. It will be among his chosen pleasures, one of the blessed offices and purest rewards of his ministry, by his counsel, sympathies, and prayers, to comfort the sorrowful, to strengthen among you the feeble-minded; to scatter the darkness of unbelief; to revive hope to the desolate; to reclaim the wanderer; to speak peace to the wounded or the contrite heart; to meet the wants and the sorrows of your souls.

But, my brethren, while it belongs to him to perform with all fidelity these indispensable, arduous offices, you will not fail to perceive how much it will depend on you, to render them profitable. In the time of your sorrow, in your chambers of sickness, and at the bed of death, I know that you will welcome him, because sorrow loves consolation. But you must labor with him to make his more accustomed pastoral intercourse, not agreeable only, but salutary; not a mere social gratification, which yet in its season is desirable, and with which he must sometimes be satisfied, but a spiritual benefit. If you seek for religious improvement from even his most familiar visits, you must contribute your part to the work. Do not meet his modest, but conscientious efforts at religious conversation with constrained looks; with a chilling repulse, or a blank indifference. Do not hasten to divert it to the easier topics of the day, to the state of the weather, to the aspect of the clouds, to the prospects of the harvest, the embarrassments

of trade, or even the most engrossing subject of political speculation. But let 'thought meet thought;' and his affectionate endeavors to render his pastoral intercourse, at once serious, natural, and useful, be seconded by your own.

On the other hand, do not be swift to complain, as are some, that his visits are short or infrequent. For he will have many to make, to those, too, of whom you may know nothing; and if faithful to all, he will find little leisure beyond the calls of duty. The poor, the sick, and the aged; they, whose friends are gone, or who are themselves departing; they, whose temporal hopes are withered, and whose hearts are made sad; the anxious, the perplexed, and the humbled, will need his assiduous cares. When, therefore, my brethren, you and your families are prospering, your houses safe from fear, and no rod of God upon your dwelling, though you may think you need him, and know you would welcome him, do not forget, that others are needing him more. Be satisfied, that he is doing good, though you may not be the immediate objects of it; and imagine not that he has forgotten you, because he is not present with you. The names of the children of Israel were inscribed upon the breast-plate of Aaron, and 'he bore them upon his heart before the Lord continually.* Think, also, that your pastor is mindful of you, even when he is far from you; that in the retirement of his study, which, if you desire fruit from his labors, must be his *home;* amidst weariness and sickness, which he may suffer as well as you; and while most employed for others, his thoughts and his prayers are still for you. Regard him, therefore, as your friend; and allow him at all times the privilege of friendship—a generous confidence in the kindness of your disposition, and your favorable interpretation of his motives.

3. Finally, brethren, it is not the least among our congratulations with you and with him this day, that your young pastor will not stand alone; that amidst the new scenes and duties before him, he will be instructed and encouraged by one, in

* Exodus xxv. 29.

whose paternal experience and affection he can securely confide. I may not here enlarge upon this—your privilege and his. The decorum of this place, and of the circumstances, under which I speak, will allow me only to say, that you have long enjoyed, as we hope you may long continue to enjoy, the blessings of a faithful ministry.* The history of your religious society, especially in these days of innovation and fervor, when many false prophets have gone forth, and much is done and boasted in the name of religion, which has nothing but the name—the history of this church, my friends, has shown you the lasting benefits of that wisdom, that dwells with prudence; of that zeal, which is guided by knowledge; of that patient waiting and confidence of faith, which can look serenely on the changes of others, itself remaining unchanged. You have witnessed here that moderation, whose praises we have heard this morning set forth; that evangelic grace, of which the Son of God was the example; which, with no false confidence or arrogance of soul, but with power, and in love and a sound mind, amidst the excitements of a restless zeal, and fervors, that pass away, meekly obeys that word of the Lord, once spoken by his prophet, 'Let them return unto thee; but go not thou to them;' and whose abiding influence is seen in the peaceful fruits of righteousness, in the subduing eloquence of a blameless life.

And now, brethren and friends, we commend you and your pastor to God and to the word of his grace. And may God himself, even our Father, direct his way unto you. And the Lord make you to abound in love, one towards another, and towards all men, to the end, that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

* The Rev. Dr Porter, with whom Mr Putnam is now associated as colleague, was ordained in October, 1782, and has therefore labored in the ministry nearly forty-eight years.

A

SERMON

ON THE

MORAL USES OF THE PESTILENCE,

DENOMINATED

ASIATIC CHOLERA.

DELIVERED ON

FAST-DAY, AUGUST 9, 1832.

By Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEW-BEDFORD.

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SERMON.

Isaiah XXVI. 9.

WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The visitation of a calamity in some respects of an unprecedented character, has awakened the world to an unusual degree of consideration. It is most desirable that this consideration should be rightly directed; that it should be guarded from all resorts to superstitious reliances, and from an absorption in mere worldly fears; and that it should yield some results adequate to the greatness of the occasion. If the world after this calamity shall have passed over it, is to be no wiser than it was before, such a failure must, to every sober mind, believing in a providence, be a deep cause of regret. The end is more important than the means. It more concerns every being to improve God's discipline, than to escape it. To fail of that end, to fail of the improvement of the discipline, would be a greater calamity than it is to endure the visitation of the pestilence itself. For surely we are not, as Christians, to forget, that there are worse evils than the pestilence—worse evils than all outward calamities—evils so much worse, that all outward calamities are designed to be their antidote and cure.

This consideration, too, of the moral uses of the prevailing

pestilence, would tend, more than any thing else, to allay the fears it inspires. To caution the people against being alarmed, to reiterate and multiply admonitions on this point, to warn the timid and terror-stricken, that this very panic is among the surest harbingers of the dreaded disease, to tell them continually that the more alarmed, the more exposed they are, to exhort and urge them, as they value their lives, to be calm, to recommend to them, in fine, by such constant implication, to try not to be afraid—this seems to be very ill adapted to answer the purpose. It is as if we would frighten people out of their fears, or hurry them into moderation and calmness. Besides, it is not easy, unless we look at the moral aspects of this calamity, to prevent some natural tremors, some agitations, perhaps, of unmanly fear. If the elements are left to work their will upon us, if they are working to no end, but to show their awful and destructive power, if the scourge is borne upon the uncommissioned winds, and its pavilion is darkness, and its way is mystery, and its end is death; and there is no object, and no explanation, and nothing for the mind to deal with, but elements, and powers, but inevitable fate, and dire necessity,—how can mortal hearts sustain themselves in the dread encounter with agents so blind, inexorable, and awful! But if there is a Power, beneficent as it is mighty, that stays, at its pleasure, the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day; if it suffers the prevalence of disease to answer wise purposes; if this calamity, however singular, is, nevertheless, a part of the universal providence; if it is, like all other means for the reform and improvement of the world, to do more good than evil; then surely may we learn to look upon it with calmness and acquiescence. Then indeed shall we look seriously upon it, and we shall look upon it with fear, too, but with a fear that is rational and religious; with a fear that will turn very much, indeed, upon the state of our own minds. We shall

think much of ourselves, and so much the less of the outward and physical forms of this evil; we shall think much of the good it is to do to millions of our fellow-men, and so much the less of the mere bills of mortality, dreadful as they are. In fine, we shall have our fears, but they will mingle much of devout and grave consideration with them—a trust and satisfaction in the wisdom of God's providence; an apprehension lest we, and others, shall not reap the good designed to be communicated; and these moral considerations will assauge and moderate those panic sensations which are now occupied with nothing but danger, and rumors of danger.

There is another argument for attention, and for universal attention. The visitation of this calamity is a voice to the world. Other calamities have been partial in their extent. Other forms of pestilence have been confined to particular countries, or districts of country. No famine ever devastated a whole continent. No war ever raged from ocean to ocean. But to the ravages of this fearful destroyer, neither oceans nor continents have set bounds. It has compassed the habitable globe. From the plains of India, from the mountains of central Asia, its march has been steady and irresistible; it has traversed deserts and seas; it has broken through all the defences which the power and vigilance of governments could set up against it; till that which, for years, has been the rumor of far off evils, is suddenly become terrific reality; and the despoiler of two continents knocks at the door of our American homes.

At such a visitation, it is meet that the world should pause. It is meet that days of fasting and humiliation and prayer should suspend the ordinary pursuits and cares of life, and give an opportunity to meditate upon the 'ways of God to man.'

I have thus far urged the propriety and advantage of a sober and attentive consideration of this extraordinary calam-

ity. But is there any thing to consider? Is there any meaning in this visitation which can, without presumption, be fixed upon, by us, as the subject of attention?

I. I ask in reply: Is there not a providence in it? Permitted, or produced, does it not come within the range of the Almighty power and agency? Who will say that it is *without* the sphere of God's government? Who will tell us where those dread regions are, over which God has no controul, in which he does *not* his pleasure? Has not the whole course of events which take place in the world, a design? Did they receive their orignal, do they receive their present, impulses, from the tendencies of matter, or the ordinations of fate? But if there are ends to be accomplished by all things, will there not be a relation, an intentional relation, between the means and the ends? Why then—so far as the agency of any event is specific—why shall we not say, that the object, the design, the meaning, is specific?

And now, let me ask, was there ever a calamity in the world, not miraculous, which apparently possessed such a high and solemn moral signficance as this pestilence? Was any design of earthly events ever more clear, specific or solemn? We saw an evil, the most insidious and deadly, entering the world by a thousand avenues, and gaining a strength, unknown to former ages, by the modern improvements, if improvements we must call them, in the processes of distillation. We saw the produce of ten thousand harvest-fields wrought, from all wholesome uses, into an intoxicating and destroying poison. We heard the voice of wailing, and lamentation and despair, from ten times ten thousand dwellings; and we asked, with many others, what can stay the progress of this horrible evil? What is to save the world? What is to leave in the world, any innocent father, mother, sister, friend, not utterly broken-hearted? And now, at this very crisis, when good men had begun to be alarmed, indeed,

but when the good were more alarmed than the bad were reformed—at this very crisis, there appears in the world, a disease unknown to former times, and it appears as the grand antagonist power to the monster, Intemperance. It strikes as its foremost victims the votaries of strong drink; and to them, its blow, though all others, or nearly all, with prudence may escape—to them its blow is almost inevitable death!

If this be not providence, what is a providence? If this be not a voice from heaven, by what tokens shall we know such a voice? If *all* the pains and penalties that follow vice, are held, in all creeds but that of the athiest, to be the remedial and disciplinary processes of the Supreme wisdom; if those specific diseases, which set their mark and brand upon particular vices, are justly to be regarded as possessing, in a more striking degree, the same admonitory character, what less shall we think of a visitation like this unprecedented pestilence? If a new species of brain-fever were to appear in the world, and if it made gamesters its principal victims, what more specific and solemn moral would it hold out, than is to be found in this plague of the cholera?

It is true, indeed, that the desire, natural to the reflecting mind, of finding reasons for things, and of finding reasonableness, intelligence and wisdom, in the whole surrounding scene of life, may have carried us too far. It is true, too, that this is one of the subjects that comes not within the range of demonstrative, but only of moral evidence. I do not say that I *know* that this is a special visitation, designed to check a particular vice; and, on the other hand, no man can say that he *knows*, it is not. I can only say, that my mind leans to this view of the subject. I firmly believe that if there had been no intemperance in the world, this pestilence would not have been in the world. But what do I say? I had thought that I was arguing, and I find that I am stating a simple fact. Certainly there would have been no such

pestilence in the world; there might have been such a disease, and it might have prevailed like other diseases—but there would have been no such *pestilence* in the world, if it had not been for intemperance. Intemperance is its very haunt, its resort, its prey—that without which, it would have no place on earth—that without which it could not live. Intemperance has occasioned it, created it, called it into being. Has it not? What means, then, the language of every medical report and opinion on the subject? What is to be made of the sense and experience of the whole world upon this point? Why do the intemperate every where feel that it is *they* who are exposed, that it is *they* who are meant? And why are so many moderate drinkers, as the disease approaches nearer and nearer to them, setting down the untasted cup? Is it too much to say, that it was designed for the check and destruction of the vice in question?

But it may be said, that the intemperate are not its only victims. It is true, that they are only its chief, its most conspicuous victims; others suffer. But this only comports with the general order of God's providence. The innocent are every where suffering with, and for, and through, the guilty. It may possibly be said, also, that this pestilence does not, after all, and will not, altogether, reform the world, and so will fail of the alleged end, and therefore could not have been designed for that end. The general answer to both these objections, is the same. God's providence over the mind, is adapted to the mind; does not compel it, or overwhelm it with flagrant and instantaneous results, but appeals to its reason, elicits its powers, respects its freedom, deals with it by influences that are gentle and persuasive, and not coercive and irresistible. Whether the world will be reformed or *not—it is warned*,—and this is the material point for us to establish. It is all the less likely to be reformed, till it feels that it is warned.

It is for this reason that I am concerned to urge the doctrine of a providence, in relation to this stupendous and wide-spreading calamity: for indeed the facts without the doctrine, are sufficient for my *main* purpose. And so eminently providential does it appear, that it might not be difficult for us to persuade ourselves, that it was designed to teach and explain this great doctrine of a providence, to the generation of the thoughtless, the negligent, and skeptical. Let us, then, dwell a moment longer upon this point, to illustrate this use, if not design, of the affliction that is sent upon us.

The difficulty sometimes found with the doctrine of a providence, is, that it is held to be special, that it recognizes the efficacy of prayer, that it is believed to interpose at the call of human weakness, and distress, and penitence. It is the *interposition* of providence, that is by some doubted.

But let it be supposed that the world were to be reformed from the vice of intemperance, and then, the cholera—that peculiar disease which is now prevailing—would cease. It would cease, because it would no longer find victims. The very element which supports it, would be taken away. On what condition, then, would it cease? The answer is, on the very condition of repentance. It would cease at the voice of humiliation and prayer; at the voice of a sorrowing and reformed people. Here, then, in a general view, is the efficacy of prayer, and here is the doctrine of a providence.

And why may we not go farther? Why may we not go beyond the general view? Why should it be thought "a thing incredible" with us, that he who inflicts the blow, should, with an interposing hand, suspend it, when its purpose is answered? It is here, perhaps, that the difficulty about a providence presses hardest. Are not the operations of nature, it may be said,—are not the laws that

govern the elements, uniform? I answer, we do not *know* that they are. What saith the visitation of this calamity? It reminds us how wide a theatre there is, for the operations of the overruling hand—how vast a region, before which the vail is lifted up, that none can penetrate. Where is the origin of this dread pestilence? Where are its dark magazines, out of which swift destruction cometh? Where is the secret of its presence, and the hiding of its power? Wisdom is baffled in the inquiry, and experience is but a blind guide. Whether it is in the heaven, or in the earth, or in the waters under the earth, it is questioned, and it is questioned in vain. Whether it is in the atmosphere, or in the human system—whether it is contagious, or infectious, or epidemic, or local, the understanding of the learned has not found out, and the wisdom of the wise has not decided. It has travelled through the world: the eyes of millions have been eagerly bent upon it; the voices of every language, have invoked from it, its dark secret; the seers of every healing art, from the Ganges to the Atlantic shore, have sought for the interpretation of its fearful signs—and still it is shrouded in impenetrable mystery. The object is clear; it is proclaimed as with the voice of a trumpet; all else is darkness and silence. Where the bolt strikes, we can see; we see who are its foremost victims; but the bosom of the black cloud, as it rolls onward, no eye has penetrated.

Let no man tell me, that in the bosom of that black cloud, there is no might, or mystery, beyond the reach and measure of his understanding,—no space for the secret work of God,—for the operations of an inscrutable and interposing providence. Let no man tell me, that he who rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm, is bound by the chains of any fate or necessity. He doth his pleasure amidst the armies of heaven, amidst the thrones and powers of the

firmament, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can say unto him, what doest thou? None can know what he doeth, or may dare to say what he doeth not; what is interposition, or what is not interposition; how far the overuling hand is stretched out, or where it is stayed; what chord in the mighty system of things it toucheth, or what hidden spring it doth unlock; what it bindeth that shall not be loosed, or looses, that shall not be bound.

But the skeptic will perhaps say, in fine, that man is a creature too insignificant to be the object of such attention and care, as we allege; that the Being who sits enthroned above the heavens, and governs millions of worlds, will not stoop to regard a thing so inconsiderable and indifferent as this dweller in the dust. But look at this being, when struggling as a victim in the grasp of the fell destroyer. If it were the lot of man, to drop from the course of life like an animal, a mere inert lump of clay, we might think differently. But what is the death of a man? What is it when it comes in the form of this disease, held to be so terrible? It is not any frightful paroxysm of pain, which makes that hour so awful; it is not the gathering mist that settles upon the closing eye-lids, that makes it so dark; it is not convulsion, and gasping for breath, and the mortal strife, that gives such intensity to every thought and feeling; but it is parting from the thousand ties that bind the heart to life; it is the solemn vision of eternity opening upon the soul; it is that intense spiritual consciousness that seems to concentrate all that is solemn and sublime in the universe, upon that dread moment; it is an element mightier than any earthly power, that imparts such grandeur to the death-bed scene; it is a portion of the Divinity, that is holding conflict with disease, and pain, and sorrow, and death. Will not God regard it, in its great and perilous hour? Can he hold that which was made in his own image, as too mean for his

interposition or disposal? Can we believe that thousands and millions in the world, are dying under the stroke of this one peculiar and extraordinary infliction, and that there is no providence and no meaning in all this?

II. But if there is a meaning in this, what is it? If there is a providence, what does it teach? What do facts teach, let the doctrine be what it may?*

The answer to this question, has been necessarily implied in the previous discussion; but we should be totally wanting to the occasion that has assembled us together, if we did not give it our direct and separate attention. I say, then, that that which providence teaches, that which facts teach the world in this great calamity, is *a lesson of temperance.* The calamity itself, as I think, naturally leads us to recognize a providence, and a special and interposing providence. But providence, if there be any in this matter, has an end. That end, if there be an end, must be, I repeat, to teach the world a lesson of temperance.

Will it not teach this? Will not increased temperance be the effect? And if it will, why should we not say, that it was intended to be the effect? But will it not, I repeat? Suppose the cholera were to remain ten years in this country, or in Europe: there is no reason to expect its speedy disappearance—it has already returned to some of the cities in Europe—it has been a long period in Asia: if, I say, the cholera were to remain ten years among us; if for that length of time it should hover in the air, ready to stoop with its deadly talons upon any dissolute city, or village, or individual, can it be doubted that by such an agency, the work of reform would be carried on with a success and effect, beyond all former example? Can it be doubted, that ten years, with the sword hanging over every man's head, would make us comparatively a temperate

*Our doctrine does not, and that for obvious reasons, contradict the text, Luke xiii. 1—5.

people ? How many is this single Summer's experience showing, that they *can* live without spirituous drinks, and that they are altogether better without them ! " When thy judgments are in the earth," saith the Prophet, and surely when such judgments are in the earth, " the inhabitants of the world *will* learn righteousness."

And if they are to learn righteousness, or if this going forth of the pestilence is fitted to teach them, then I am prepared to take another step, and to say, that it is a beneficent visitation. If you doubt whether your ears hear me rightly, I repeat it, and say it is a *beneficent visitation.* I confess that I do no not partake of the unmixed and supreme horror, which many feel at this disease. There is another calamity, another curse, which, as I believe, it is designed to remove, and which impresses me with greater horror. The Cholera, I am firmly persuaded, will prevent more suffering than it will occasion. The woes of unrestricted intemperance in this country for ten years, would be far greater than the woes of a ten years' plague. I cannot pray, therefore, without the most careful qualification, and the most guarded submission, that this pestilence should depart from our borders. I dare not say, it is best for us that it should depart. I dare not absolutely pray for the removal of this disease, any more than for the removal of many other diseases. I see clearly that the world would sink at once into the ruins of sensual indulgence, if no pain or sickness followed excess. I see that to indulgence, disease, of some kind or other, is the antagonist power. I *now* see indulgence of one particular species, rising to a most alarming height ; and I see a disease breaking out at the same time to counteract it. This, to my apprehension, is the method which Providence has adopted for teaching the lesson of temperance. Say that this pestilence is developed by intemperance itself, or say that its causes, not

of any new creation, have always lain hidden in the bosom of the elements; or say that it is the result of general laws; still it is none the less the teaching of Providence. And I dare not absolutely ask that the teaching should be suspended till the lesson is learnt. Though the discipline be costly and dear, I dare not ask it. I know that it is taking from us the lives of some valuable and beloved citizens, but I do not esteem even *their* lives too precious a sacrifice for the salvation of the land. I see the innocent, indeed, dying for the guilty; but I see in this, only the usual order of God's providence; I see, indeed, the order of his grace; I see, as it were, Jesus again in his members, dying for the world.

The horrors of the Cholera, I must be allowed to repeat, are not the greatest horrors that are to be found in the abodes of the civilized world. The convulsions of this disease are not, in my eyes, *so* horible as the paroxysm of drunkenness—the riotings of its merriment, or the writhings of its fury. The delirium of sickness is not so dreadful as the madness of the inebriate man. The dreaded "collapse" presents not a picture so dreadful as the poor wretch who lies by the wayside; no waiting friends or sympathizing kindred around him; senseless to the passing jest or buffet; no longer a human being, but the ghastly ruins of what was once human. And a brief sickness and a speedy death carry no such agony to the bosom of a family as ten, or twenty, or thirty years of dissoluteness in it; no, nor as one year's woe and shame of intemperance, in one of its before cherished and beloved members. Nor doth the land mourn, nor ever can it mourn for a pestilence, nor is its substance wasted, nor are all its laws and safeguards sapped and undermined, though all the plagues of Egppt fall upon it—no, there is no such peril to any people in all this, as there is in the poisoned fountains of intoxication that are now deluging the world—there is no such sorrow, as the sorrow of millions by their desolate hearths, made deso-

late by this accursed indulgence; there is no such "cup of trembling" and of "wrath poured out without mixture," as the horrible cup of excess!

It is impossible not to observe in this connection, that this judgment of Providence on the people at large, is especially a voice of admonition, a call for reform, to cities and populous places. It has always been found that in proportion as men congregate together, and wealth increases in the hands of of some, and poverty presses hard upon others, that the vices shoot up into monstrous and fearful luxuriance. The most splendid advantages, the brightest gifts of heaven as they seem at least to most men, are here set in glaring and mournful contrast with the most awful abuses of them. It is here too perhaps, that the noblest virtues are developed and formed; but the powers of good in these circumstances have hitherto held but a feeble and doubtful conflict with the powers of evil; they have not, indeed, been put forth; and christian men and women in our cities, are yet, perhaps, to learn the measure and the methods of their duty.

It would be dulness, worse than ingratitude, and more inexcusable, not to refer in this view to the noble efforts for teaching the poor and rescuing the vicious, which are now making by a christian ministry devoted to those objects, in the metropolis of our own State—efforts, which it is hoped will in process of time, present to the world, the model of a Christian City.* This Ministry for the poor in cities, like the Sunday School, and the improved Prison Discipline, and the Bethel Churches, I regard as one of the great moral discoveries of the age. Physical causes, I trust, are also to lend their aid. It seems to me, not an extravagant anticipation, that the astonishing improvements about to be introduced in the facilities for carriage and passage,—the rail-roads, I mean—will have the effect to prevent the enormous growth of cities,

*Rev. Dr. Tuckerman's Reports, Boston.

to send their inhabitants abroad to build beautiful and delightful abodes in the country, and will thus tend to break up those hot beds of vice, those congregated masses of filth and misery which are now found in them. Meanwhile this pestilence is doing its work—its work of mercy as well as of judgment—its work of physical as well as moral purification. It would be scarcely too much to say, that the cleansing of our cities and villages, especially if it may be a precedent for future years, will save more lives, than the cholera will destroy.

Will there not be a moral cleansing, also? Will not this judgment of the Most High, strike a salutary dread into the scenes of drunkenness, debauchery, and sabbath-breaking—and of that horrible filthiness which is itself a heinous sin? Is not that very point—the mass of evil in cities—that wickedness in high places, to which, of all the earth, the philanthropist and christian have looked with the greatest despondency,—is it not to have light poured in upon it—the light of inquiry and of hope? Are not the miseries of those ten thousand thronged abodes, which it makes the heart ache to think of—are they not to be relieved? Is not that pestilential atmosphere of contagious vice, forever hanging over the cities and crowded villages of the world, and every year drawing millions from the healthful airs of a simple and rural life, to breathe it and die—is it not, at length, to be purified? Is not this fearful stroke of the lightning from heaven, to break the heavy and thick and settled cloud, beneath which such iniquities and abominations have been done for ages? When, ye children of darkness and vice and vileness! will ye hear? Hath not trembling and death come into your habitations? Hath not horror taken hold of your hearts? When, till the judgment-hour break upon you, will ye listen to the voice of God?

I feel, too, that this visitation ought to speak to men in

power, to the rulers of the earth, and to those, who, by their influence, reign in society. Why are those masses of vice, and filth, and famine, and bodily prostration, where the cholera finds its haunt, suffered to exist? It is, in part, because great men, aye, and good men, have failed to do their duty.—Much of this prostration, physical and moral, is to be referred, ultimately, to political oppression, to arbitrary distinctions in society, to cruel and unjust laws, and to proud self-complacency and selfishness, "passing by, on the other side." In Asia, helpless millions have been swept away, the victims of grinding tyranny and of unparalleled social abuses. Such victims are to be found in Europe, too; nor are they wanting in America! When, let me ask then—ye great ones of the earth, and ye good men! when will *ye* hear? When will the whole power of the world, political and moral, arise to do good, and to heal the wounds of society, and to build up the fallen fortunes of afflicted humanity!

No, I am not indifferent to the fate of the unhappy victims of this visitation, hurried as they are by thousands to an untimely grave, and to a sudden and unlooked-for judgment. Who, with a Christian's heart, will not mourn for them, as well as for the evil that they have inflicted upon the world? And yet, what can I say to *them*, or to the partakers of their guilt—what can I say, more or less than this? "You have been reasoned with, pleaded with, besought, warned, by every voice of tenderness and by every voice of terror, that God has given to man, or to woman, to utter, and it has been all in vain. You have resisted the outstretched hands of affection, and the pleading eye, and the breaking heart. You have trampled upon the dearest interests of society, as if it were without remorse. You have trampled upon all the admonitions of God's word and providence, as if it were, without fear. You have trodden under

foot all the agonizing remonstrances of your own hearts and consciences, as if they were but fit to pave your way to the resorts and haunts of indulgence. Would to God, that all this had not been in vain; but it has been in vain. It has been all in vain! You *would* not hear. You would not relent. You would not give up the deadly draught that bereaved you of every thing to respect, and of every thing to love. The child, the wife, the friend, have asked permission but to respect, but to love you; and you have hardened yourself against appeals, that might have broken—Oh! they might have broken, a heart of stone." What then shall we say? Must we say and think, that it is hard, very hard, that this additional, this last dread infliction, has come upon the victims of excess,—that this bolt has fallen, as it were, direct from heaven, to dash the guilty cup from their hands? God Almighty give them grace to be wise in the day of his rebuke! We dare not prescribe the term of this, to the vicious, tremendous day. May it be shortened, we are ready to say; yet we dare not ask that it may be shortened, but through the intervention of repentance, at the instance of a humbled and reformed people!

This, my friends, is the only escape, of which we can feel any assurance, or ought to feel any *very* strong desire. This pestilence has a moral mission to fulfil; its fulfilment is the only pledge for its termination. No services, no offerings to God, coming short of this, can promise us any relief. No wall of prayers is to be built up, to keep out this dreaded disease; no mere solemnities of fasting and humiliation, will disinfect the atmosphere; nothing, within our knowledge, but removing the cause, will remove the curse.

One word more, and I will relieve your attention from the unusual task, which I have ventured, at this time, to lay upon it.

What is it, then, I ask, which imparts to the pestilence,

whose ravages have been the occasion of setting apart this day of solemn prayer and humiliation,—what imparts to this pestilence, I say, its peculiar horror? And, I answer, it is the terrible *speed* with which it does its work. It is not that its victims, according to present appearances, are likely to be more numerous than sometimes are the victims of a prevailing influenza, or of a malignant fever; not more numerous, than are, every year, the victims of consumption. It is, that the cholera, unlike every other disease that has appeared among us, makes but a step, between us and death. It is, that *death* has been brought near to many minds, as it never was before. The impression has been made upon them, in a character and with an emphasis altogether new, that they might, indeed, die suddenly; that their moral account with this life, might be made up, and settled, and sealed forever, in a few brief hours; that although to-day in the midst of life, to-day walking in the same negligent course as for years before, to-day unprepared to die,—yet that to-morrow's rising sun might behold them dead, and its parting ray might shine around the grave, that had closed upon them forever.

It is, my brethren, a most solemn and monitory conviction. This pestilence has created an era, I believe, in many of our minds, from which a new spiritual life ought to be dated. We have erred in this matter; we have erred in regard to the strict account, which we have to give, of life. We have been misled, with the negligent world, into the irrational, the absurd idea, that we may live in sin, and yet die in safety; that we may live without religion, and yet die with it; that we may at last find some gracious dispensation from the law that is to "render to every man according to his living deeds." We have vaguely and vainly imagined, with multitudes in the same delusion, that our sickness may, at length, do, what our health will not; that the last feeble

pulses of life, may be strong enough to turn back the mighty current of tastes, and affections, and habits, that for years has been flowing on with accumulated power.

This is one of the grand ruining delusions of the world. "It is not this day," men are perpetually saying, and still with every successive period of life they are saying, forever saying, "it is not this day, it is not this year, on which I can venture the decision of the great question for eternity; by and bye," is the secret thought of thousands of hearts, "by and bye, amidst the days of sickness and sorrow, or of old age, I will prepare for heaven." Let this solemn visitation of God, let this voice of the pestilence, break up forever that tremendous delusion. It speaks not only to the heinous transgressor, but scarcely less awfully to the careless neglector of his duty. It is in his heart, a voice of weighty admonition. What meaneth,—if it means not this—what meaneth that fear, curdling the very heart's blood,—the fear of smiting disease and sudden death? Yes, its meaning is moral. It is not a mere dread of pain, or of parting with life. It is a fear, breathed in the deeper recesses of the soul. It is a voice, that speaks of duties neglected, of sins indulged, of the soul, unprepared for death. That very fear, that very voice, believe me, shall yet give witness at the bar of judgment: for us, or against us,—to proclaim our fidelity, or our neglect,—to declare that we have listened to the voice of God's judgments, or have hardened ourselves in the day of his rebuke. But let me not close with the words of this last dreadful alternative upon my lips. Let us hope better things, and things that pertain to salvation. Let us give all earnestness, to meditation, and watchfulness, and humble prayer, that we may be found faithful to all the teachings of God's wisdom, and all the tokens of God's will!

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SERMON I.

BY REV. ORVILLE DEWEY, OF NEW-BEDFORD, MASS.

ON RELIGIOUS ANXIETY.

PHIL. ii. 12.—*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

THIS passage not only teaches us the necessity of diligent endeavors to obtain salvation, but also points out one characteristic of that state of mind with which they should be pursued; and this characteristic is religious anxiety. "Fear and trembling," when they relate to an object to be gained or to be lost, necessarily involve this anxiety. I shall devote the usual season this morning, to the consideration of this subject. And I do so, the rather, because the circumstances of our past religious history, and the spirit of the times, I fear, expose this solicitude to misapprehension and distrust.

As to the nature of religious anxiety, I suppose, it may be as intelligible as any other anxiety and yet it needs to be carefully distinguished from inordinate terror and morbid melancholy, for these and other perversions of it, as I shall take occasion to observe, have brought it under great objection. To be anxious then about our business, our reputation, our prospects in life, our friends, our children, is more or less the experience of every one, and is therefore very intelligible. Now to entertain such a solicitude about our religious welfare; to feel, not an extravagant excitement, indeed, nor an absorbing terror; but to feel deep, and sober and reasonable apprehensions of danger to ourselves; of danger to ourselves as accountable creatures; as weak and erring and sinful creatures; encompassed with temptations, often wavering, often falling, always exposed—and yet, amidst sins and follies, amidst temptations and dangers, hastening to a solemn judgment;—to feel all this, is to cherish a religious anxiety.

This state of mind however, as I have already hinted has sometimes had the misfortune to be very much misunderstood.

and in particular to be regarded as mean, irrational and unbecoming. There are some who treat it with coarse ridicule. There are others, of more improved, but most unfortunately biassed understandings, by whom, it is, perhaps, regarded with a secret contempt. I say, improved, and yet unfortunately biassed; for I hold religious anxiety in some form of it, to be one state, I had almost said, one attribute, of every reflecting and superior mind. There are the elements of religious thought and fear in such a mind; there is a weariness of earthly vanities; there is a want which the world does not supply; there is a reaching forth to God and to eternity. It was so, with the sages of antiquity. It has been so, with the great and the wise ever since: except in cases, where a bad heart, or some peculiarly unfortunate influence has perverted and biassed their opinions. There have been such influences without doubt: and perhaps, they have existed in an uncommon degree, in the religious history of our own country. Religious solicitude has been so often connected with extravagance, weakness, fanaticism, fallacious excitement and slavish terror; it has so often subsided, after it came to its crisis, into an awful stupidity, or begotten an outrageous confidence, (for all strong emotion tends to this,) or else as in some instances has resulted in melancholy insanity; that really it has been regarded by some as an impeachment of the understanding to indulge it. There are others probably who, if they do not look upon this anxiety with contempt as a weakness regard it with pity, as a mistake. In other words, they regard it as utterly needless. They are accustomed to think of religion rather exclusively as the quiet discharge of common duties; as being honest and industrious and outwardly decent. They seem to think that religion is not a subject on which the whole of our nature is to be employed—the fervent and earnest, as well as the intelligent and reflecting. They want a religion that is *simply* rational and calm. If they saw one, that was very anxious about his religious character and prospects—if they knew that his feelings often impelled him to seek the shade of retirement where he might meditate and pray—if they knew that he sometimes shed tears of concern over his religious interests, they would involuntarily feel as if this was too much.

Now, whether such anxiety is too much; whether it is more than is demanded by the nature of the case and the religion of the New Testament, let it be candidly inquired.

Tell me, then,—if any doubt on this subject—do you doubt, because you hold it to be unlawful and improper to be anxious at all? It is too much gravely to propound, and to number up the reasons for this state of mind, and I will defend it rather on the lowest supposition short of the most absolute and impracticable stoicism. Is it admitted then that it is proper to be anxious at all? Were hope and fear, do you suppose, (and the union of these makes anxiety,)—were they intended for any use or exercise? You answer that undoubtedly they were; that they were intended alternately to encourage and to alarm the mind, in order to preserve it from danger and to prompt it to exertion. Now, in moral beings—beings, the very object of whose existence is their moral—their religious perfection and happiness—on what can these principles of hope and fear so properly and directly bear as on religion? What shall call forth their most earnest exercise if this shall not? What shall move us to solicitude and apprehension, if the matter of our happiness, of our salvation shall not? Are the principles of our nature to be turned to every purpose but to the very purpose for which we were created?

But how is the fact? However we might reason about the *propriety* of being anxious, the fact is that we *are* anxious, about every thing on earth that affects our happiness. If religion is excluded from our solicitude be it remembered that it is the only subject of any practical concern that is so. There are anxieties, there are fears and tremblings about every thing else in life, if not about this. Surely anxiety is not so uncommon, so alien to our hearts, that it must be rejected for being unnatural or monstrous. Oh! no: our hearts tell us that there are anxieties for our possessions, our comforts, our friends, our children and every thing that we call ours. Now, amidst all the fears and cares and solicitudes that form a portion of our daily experience, are there none that turn to the perfection and safety of the immortal part within us? Are we forever solicitous about the phantoms of life that we pursue, and does it never occur to us to reflect, what we ourselves are that pursue them, and whither this pursuit—whither this progress of life is conducting us? Or, is it of no consequence what we are, and what is our destination? Who will risk his sense and intellect on the credit of such a proposition? Who does not know that his happiness, and his worth, depend, not upon what he gets, but upon what he is; not upon

his possessions, but upon his virtues; not upon what he *has* in this vanishing state but upon what he SHALL have, in the eternal allotments of his being; in the enduring qualities of his mind?

The only question that remains, then, is whether the virtues of religion; whether a religious temper and spirit; whether, in fine, all that present character and future happiness which are implied in salvation, are of so easy attainment, that there is no need of anxiety about them? And here it is in this very point, my Brethren, that the argument attains its climax. True piety,—real and spiritual virtue—or in other words, real, moral worth, is infinitely the best acquisition we can make. This surely might awaken our zeal, to possess it. But, then, it is also, infinitely the most difficult acquisition that we can make. This addresses our fear; this, if any thing can, must awaken our solicitude. The case is incomparably stronger than the acquisition of property, about which it is thought so lawful to be anxious. To the latter, all the strongest propensities of our nature impel us. But in securing the former, in securing our religious welfare, we have every thing to contend with. We have temptations without; we have foes within. How hard is it to govern our own spirit! How hard is it to preserve a kind, gentle, meek and forgiving temper, in a world of competitions, calumnies and provocations! How hard to maintain a devout spirit, when material objects so press us on every side, and there are so many evil influences within and without us, to estrange us from God! How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God! How hardly shall they that have many worldly gratifications and pleasures, or great offices and honors, or idolized children and friends; or else bitter disputes and contentions, bad tempers and habits, sensual desires and vicious propensities—a questionable love of prayer but a positive and unquestionable love of the world—how hardly shall these enter into the kingdom of heaven! the kingdom of purity! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for such to enter.

Indeed I might appeal to the heathen writers on morals, and it is natural in speaking of the reason and nature of the case to appeal to these oracles of reason,—who though they recommended a far less difficult, and far less estimable virtue, than we are instructed to seek after, insist on more zeal, ear-

nestness and solicitude, than, I fear, is often found among us. No labors no pains were thought too much; no effort abstinence or sacrifice was to be spared; no dangers nor hardships were to be shunned, in the attainment of virtue. They needed but the light of reason to teach them that no high excellence was to be attained without laborious and anxious effort. —Indeed there is a loftiness of mind, in the writings of some of these mighty dead, which in a sort of Jewish habit we have, of casting contempt on the heathen, we are apt to undervalue and which does most severely reproach our low and worldly views. There was a high sense of the worth of the soul entertained by these sages of the ancient philosophy; there was a solemn interest about its destination; there was a prying inquisitiveness and a boding melancholy, on this great concern, that puts our indifference to shame. Let us not imagine that this indifference is the coolness of philosophy, or the intrepidity of superior intellect. It is not courage about futurity, but it is cowardice, that dares not look to the future, or it is stupidity still more shameful, that perceives nothing there, that should awaken its concern. Let it claim no kindred with philosophy. Let it pretend to no alliance with thought and greatness. He who looks with coolness or contempt on the religious anxieties of his neighbor, has a right indeed to enjoy his opinion; but he must enjoy it in an almost solitary seclusion from the greatest, and wisest, and best men on earth. He might have found some *learned* companions in the last age, but, I trust, he will hardly find them in this. And whatever he may think, he may depend upon it, that, in this, he does not stand among the men of thought and feeling, among the intellectual and the gifted, among the great minds of the world!

But let us not make too much of this case. There is after all a great deal of religious anxiety among us: too little indeed, but still so much, that probably there are none to be found, who would not feel sensibly relieved, if they could be sure that the great interests of their religious and eternal well-being were safe. The strength and bitterness of contempt with which some persons have ridiculed religious concern has only betrayed the very solicitude which they condemn. Reason, I thank God, is too strong for us all on this subject. Our nature speaks out and proclaims its origin. We have all, even the most indifferent, some fears and tremblings about

futurity. The fault is, that they are not strong nor permanent enough, to lead to any substantial and practical results. We do not cherish them as we ought. And one reason is that we have superficial views of religion itself,—we are not enough convinced, that to beings such as we are, solicitude is a necessary part of religion; we are not, I fear, thoroughly embued with the spirit of the New Testament. We may have reasoned well; we may have speculated greatly, and yet not have justly and earnestly felt. We may have judged, as sensible and thoughtful men would, and have given our respect to religion ; and yet we may not have gone beyond this, as we must go, to attain to the deep feeling of christians.

Let me therefore direct you to the instructions of the New Testament. And from these I must be content with adducing one observation, and bringing one example.

The observation is this; that you can find nothing—I believe, at least, that you can find nothing in the instructions of the New Testament more striking than their adaptation to awaken in us the very feeling of which I have been speaking; to awaken in us a solemn anxiety about our duties, and dangers and prospects as religious beings.

It would seem impossible to mistake the tenor of our Saviour's teaching on this point. Indeed he came into the world to save that which was lost, and he acted and taught as if the object was infinitely interesting and our danger unspeakably affecting. "What shall it profit a man," says he, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Would you know what exertions and sacrifices he would recommend for its welfare? hear him again. "If thy hand offend thee cut it off; if thine eye offend thee—i. e. in either case, *cause* thee to offend—pluck it out, for it is better for thee to enter into life halt and maimed, than having two eyes or two hands to be cast into hell." Do you ask whether the danger here implied, is of any general concern, or whether it is confined to a few notorious offenders? Hear him yet again. On a certain occasion there were some present who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus said, suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans. I tell you nay, but except YE repent, ye shall ALL likewise perish." Will it now be said that these are only isolated passages, that they stand by themselves, and do not indicate the general tenor of his instructions? If you would put this sug-

gestion to the test, consider how you would yourself have been affected if you had *heard* him in his daily teaching. Could you have been with the disciples of John, when they requested an interview with him, and have "abode with him that day"—what a day, (may we suppose,) what an epoch would it have been in your life? Does any one believe that he could have come away from such an interview, with the great and solemn Teacher, supremely anxious to acquire property, to gain an office, or to invent a new pleasure? Does any one believe that wealth and rank and fashion would then be the brightest things in his estimation? How would these things fade away in our sight! and the things of another world; the things that belong to the soul, and to the judgment, and to an endless being would fill and absorb our thoughts. And how would he, who knew what was in man; how would he, on such an occasion detect the state of our hearts, spread before us our secret and forgotten sins, exhibit in its odious forms every evil temper and unworthy desire; and as he talked with us, how would he hold up to our view, the standard of awful purity till we were ashamed and humbled to the dust! In what living colors would he describe the sin of ingratitude, so little thought of—the neglect of prayer, so common!—With what overwhelming views would he represent the vanity of our worldly wishes, the folly of our worldly anxieties, and summing up all that is glorious and all that is tremendous in the prospect of immortality, and contrasting it with the vanity of every thing earthly, how would he have *compelled* conviction, as he exclaimed, one thing is needful!—seek first and principally the kingdom of heaven!—what shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?

My friends, these instructions are serious. It would be easy to go over the whole New Testament, and trace every where the same character. I have time, only to select a single instance, and that shall be as I have proposed, *an example*. If we expect to be saved, we probably expect to be saved as others have been. There is no easier way to heaven, than prophets and saints have trod. Now if there has ever been a saint, a christian, who might pause in the way and take his rest, who had reason to be satisfied with himself and sure of his future happiness, it probably was Paul. And yet Paul recognizes the fearful possibility, "lest I myself be a cast-away." And with all his attainments we find him saying, with the ev-

ident feelings of an anxious man, "if by any means I *might* attain to the resurrection of the dead." And again, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Who will venture to be held exempt from an anxiety, which this holy Apostle so deeply felt for himself?

The propriety and necessity of religious solicitude has now been argued, in the first place, from the nature and reason of the case; in other words, from the principles of the mind, from the analogy of earthly pursuits, from the infinite worth of a religious character, and the extreme difficulty of acquiring it: and in the second place, from the evident and universal tenor of the New Testament.

Did the time permit, I would offer some considerations on the use and regulation of this state of mind. They would be briefly these: to note the declaration of the Apostle—"work out your own salvation," and to observe the necessity of personal effort, and at the same time to seek divine aid, since he has added, "for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do;" to be perfectly rational, while deeply earnest in this matter; and above all not lightly to dismiss, but sacredly to cherish these anxieties. There are epochs in the history of the mind as well as of nations. There is a harvest season in the moral as well as the material creation. Whenever you are anxious about your religious welfare, and every one is so at times, you know not how much of the great futurity depends on this state of mind. Strive, at such a moment, would the moral teacher say, strive as if it were perdition to fail. Open and deliberate crime has its victims. But religious indifference it is that destroys its millions. The only antidote, the only redeeming power, is religious solicitude. If you have any portion of it now, if you feel any tenderness of spirit, any solemn anxiety, any gracious fear; Oh! look upon this state of mind as the kindest visitation of heaven to you; cherish it; cling to it; and never let it go till it has fulfilled the work of its commission. Death will soon teach us, and eternity will reveal, that we have not done too much nor indulged too many anxieties, for the immortal part of our nature. God grant that it may reveal also that we have not labored in vain! AMEN.

SERMON II.

By Rev. Dr. BANCROFT, of Worcester, Mass.

THE OFFICE OF REASON IN THE CONCERNS OF RELIGION.

Isaiah i. 18.—*Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord.*

This is the language of the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel. Addressing his countrymen in the name of Jehovah, he had remonstrated with them against a religious dependence on ceremonial observances, while they cherished impure affections, and persisted in vicious practices. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord.—The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with.—When you make many prayers, I will not hear. Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." This requisition being complied with, God condescends to reason with his children on the propriety of his forgiving their offences, and to give an assurance that he will grant them pardon and favour. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool."

From this emphatical appeal by the mouth of Isaiah, and from the general language of the bible it is evident, that God deals with men as rational, moral, accountable beings; and that his administrations approve themselves to the natural dictates of the human mind. In the Old and New Testament we are invited to examine the dispensations of God with the children of men, and judge of the wisdom, rectitude and benevolence manifested by them.

My purpose at this time is to consider the office of reason in the concerns of religion. We have often heard reason decried. Carnal reason has almost become a proverbial phrase; and a particular system of Christian doctrine has been charged with the error of being too rational. The laborious endeavors of learned theologians to explain the true meaning of the sacred pages, have sometimes been denominated attempts to exalt human reason above the authority of revelation. No warrant

can be found in our scriptures for these allegations; on the contrary, we are bound deliberately to examine the grounds of moral duty, that we may act rationally. Serious reflection must convince every man, that without the exercise of reason no religious act can be performed.

1. Reason renders men capable of religion, and every office to which they are called in this high concern, whether it relate to doctrine or precept, to faith or practice, is a rational exercise.

A belief of the being, attributes and government of God, which is the foundation of both natural and revealed religion, results from the proper exercise of reason. By an examination of the works of nature and the course of events, amidst which men live and move and act, they are established in the opinion, that things around them cannot be self existent or eternal, but must have had a beginning; and the marks of design and unity in the material system, and the benevolent tendency of all operations and events in the kingdom of nature teach men, that the creator and governor of the world is wise, and powerful and good. Confirmed in the belief of the wise and beneficent superintendence of Deity over the creatures of his power, men are qualified to judge of the evidence, which supports any scheme, that claims the authority of a revelation of the divine will and purpose.

Unless men are previously established in the belief that the creator and ruler of the world is a perfect being, on what evidence could they admit any pretended system of revelation? On what principles could they be assured, that it was not a scheme of deception and abuse? Persuaded of the rectitude and goodness, as well as the wisdom and power of the supreme governor of the world, men may give credence to the Heavenly messenger, who shows the seal of this great and good Architect and Governor stamped on his commission.

The attentive reader of the New Testament will perceive a difference in the address of the apostles, to Jew and Gentile, founded on this principle, when laboring to convert them to the Christian faith.—The Jews had through a long period been favoured with a divine dispensation which revealed the character and government of God; and they were confirmed in the belief of his existence, his unity, and universal supremacy: with their countrymen, therefore, the apostles reasoned from their own sacred books, and proved, that Jesus was the Mesiah, whose advent Moses and all the prophets had predicted,

and whom God had promised as the Redeemer of Israel. This they did, that the Jews might be convinced, that God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto them by his son.—When preaching to pagans, who were destitute of worthy apprehensions of the attributes of the presiding Divinity, and were enslaved by idolatry, and darkened by superstition, the apostles first stated the proof of the existence and perfections of the one living and true God, the Creator and Governor of the world, and then proceeded to show, that the works of Jesus, and the miracles, which they themselves in his name wrought, bore such resemblance to the works of creation as to prove, that the maker of the world had commissioned Jesus to reveal his will to mankind, and had thereby laid a sure foundation for faith in his mission, and confidence in his promises. Thus St. Paul to the Athenians, "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown God.' Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God, that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from any one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

When established in the belief that Jesus Christ had given satisfactory proof of a divine commission, men were prepared to examine his communications, and judge, whether the doctrines he taught and the precepts he inculcated comported with

the character of one, who proclaimed himself the messenger of God to the world of mankind, empowered to publish to them the truths pertaining to eternal life, and teach them the conditions of pardon, and peace and salvation.

2. It is by the sober exercise of reason, that men acquire a knowledge of doctrines revealed.

Suppose a prophet or an apostle should speak to men in a language which they did not understand, could his words be called a revelation of the divine will? Or, suppose the great body of the people of our country, had the sacred scriptures only in the languages in which they were originally written, would not the bible be to them a sealed book, and to all the purposes of sound faith and consistent practice altogether useless? When placed in their hands in a language which they understand, they must acquire a knowledge of its meaning in the manner by which they become acquainted with the information contained in compositions, that respect the most ordinary concerns of human life and manners.

The interest which religion involves, requires indeed the greatest seriousness and diligence in the study of oracles, that are able to make us wise to salvation. In this study, the most intelligent may meet with difficulty. Our bible was originally composed in languages, whose idioms were very different from that of ours; the several authors allude to customs and manners with which we are imperfectly acquainted, and they make use of bold figures and glowing metaphors, which we should receive with much limitation. Our scriptures were designed for all ages of the world, and for all nations of men subsequent to the period at which our religion was established on earth; they embrace the whole system of faith and contain the sum of moral duty; and they are opened to the illiterate, as well as the learned. While our scriptures thus contain a sufficient rule of faith and practice for men of every age and country, in them are also found references to local circumstances, and a relation of disputes and divisions, which existed among primitive churches:—particularly respecting the controversy that early arose between Jewish and Gentile converts, about the ceremonial law of Moses. In these circumstances and disputes, Christian disciples of the present day have little, if any interest.

Considerations of this nature render it evident, that in the study of our scriptures there is opportunity for the assiduous

exercise of the highest powers of intellect, and for the useful employment of every serious mind.—To learn the true import of oriental phrases; to gain a knowledge of ancient customs and manners, and acquire the meaning of the sacred writers in their allusions to them; to settle satisfactorily the sense of scriptural writers, when stating and explaining points of doctrine; to determine where these writers describe the peculiar state of a primitive church, and where they have reference to the Christian church as a permanent body, and direct their instructio ns, admonitions and precepts to the members of the church universal; and to apply general principles and precepts to particular cases of practice, will not be thought slight and easy labour. Yet, all this is the province of reason. Who then will discard reason, when searching the scriptures for articles of faith and for rules of life.

In forming an opinion of revealed truths, every man must be governed by his own judgment. On this subject, human authority is not admitted. Religion is a personal interest, and no human being, in concerns purely religious, may interfere between God and the souls of men. But what is wanting cannot be numbered. God requires no more than the improvement of talents given. This may be the consolation and support of those, who are denied the ability, or the opportunity to enter deeply into theological studies, or to acquaint themselves with biblical criticisms. Every individual, who studies the Bible in the love of truth, and searches the sacred pages to know his duty that he may perform it, will acquire the knowledge of all truth essential to his individual salvation; and his sincere and persevering endeavors to fill up the measure of his duty towards God and man, will be accepted at the day of retribution.

No one is allowed to call any man Father on earth; no one may rest his christian faith on human authority; each individual member of the Christian community is, in religion, independent of every other individual; and no promise is given to those who are thoughtless, and indifferent about their own immortal interests. God requires as well the cultivation of one talent, as of ten. He requires that small as well as great advantages should be improved. No one will finally be accepted and rewarded because he was endowed with great natural faculties, nor because, in the state of probation, he possessed many external privileges. None will be condemned on ac-

count of natural defects, nor for his destitution of the means of moral improvement; but every individual of mankind will be rewarded in proportion to his improvements in religious knowledge, and his attainments in Christian virtue made with the capacity originally given him, and under the means with which he was favored.

The gospels and the epistles of the New Testament, inculcate every truth essential to our salvation. The mind of the greatest compass, and of the highest culture may be made wiser and better by the diligent perusal of the sacred oracles, and an habitual observance of christian institutions; and the man of the most humble capacity, and placed in a situation the least favorable for moral acquisitions may, if faithful to himself, in the same manner become wise unto salvation. Among the various ways in which the authors of the New Testament state essential truths, and describe the terms of salvation, he will find some suited to his state of mind and adapted to his condition of action.

In all matters of faith, reason must be exercised, and those opinions only are consistent, which result from serious inquiry and impartial examination. Reason has also its appropriate exercise in every practical duty, enjoined by our religion. I therefore observe,

3. In the application of christian principles reason is essential.

The rules of moral conduct contained in the bible, embrace all the transactions of human society, and all the relations of human life; but for the most part they are found in general principles, and comprehensive precepts; and their application to the infinite variety of circumstances that attend human agency, requires discrimination and judgment. One or two examples will fully illustrate this remark.—"Thou shalt not kill," is one of the first and most sacred laws appointed by God for the regulation of human conduct. What is the import of this law? When does a man incur the penalty, denounced against its violation? Is every case of homicide a breach of this law? Is the execution of a criminal in the course of judicial proceedings, murder in the true sense of the divine law? Is the slaughter of an enemy on the field of battle, in a war waged by an established government, murder? Is the destruction of an assassin in defence of one's life, or of the life of a wife, or a child murder? The general answer to these questions would be in the negative; but great and good

men have given affirmative answers to all of them. There is then room for inquiry, and every man should for himself determine the extent of the prohibition. Whoever, in this instance acts agreeably to the dictates of a conscience, which he has endeavored to enlighten, will have the approbation of his own mind, and may rest in the persuasion that God will accept him though his judgment be erroneous. He who violates the dictates of his own mind, is self condemned.

Take in the next place an example, which more nearly respects our relation to God. "Swear not at all," is the precept of our Saviour. One class of Christians conform to this command in its letter; and though they object not to an oath in its esssence, yet they refuse the usual form because it contains a prohibited word. Christians as a body believe that this prohibition respects religious vows, and not solemn oaths. To a correct opinion on this subject, examination is necessary, and the office of reason is apparent.

A third example may be taken from the precept enjoining beneficence and charity.—"Give to him that asketh of thee," says our Saviour, "and from him who would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." In the application of these precepts, there is room for the exercise of sound discretion. We should discriminate among various objects of charity, determine the amount to be given, and fix on the manner in which with the best effect it may be bestowed. In lending, we must make up a judgment, whether the article requested would benefit him who desires to borrow, and whether the advantage to him would compensate us for the inconvenience of lending. All this is the province of reason.

In respect to the common transactions of human life, happily the moral virtues enjoined by the gospel, are in themselves so pure, they are so congenial to the natural sentiments of an uncorrupted mind, and the precepts regulating them are so plain, that no one who maintains an honest intention, and sincerely desires to know his duty that he may perform it, can mistake their application.

4. When errors are introduced into the pure and simple system of Christianity, their correction can be expected only by the right use of enlightened reason.

That our religion has been corrupted by human admixtures, all will acknowledge. Overlooking the purpose and end of

the mediation and ministry of our Saviour, how many of his professed disciples have perverted the principles, and counteracted the moral tendency of his gospel? In that instance, it has been made to give its sanction to the visionary flights of an enthusiastic imagination; and in this, it has been claimed as an authority for abuses, designed to promote schemes of personal aggrandizement and worldly domination. Not satisfied with an acquaintance with truths which God has plainly revealed, and with the use of rules that are profitable in the direction of human conduct, a too common error of Christians has been to pry into mysteries, and vainly endeavor to become wise above what is written, and thus men have darkened counsel by words without knowledge.

From these causes, Christian professors have divided into numerous sects, which have represented vital religion to consist in the belief of their peculiar speculative views, in a conformity to their formal observances, and in a confidence of having passed through exercises, which they denominate sanctifying. The Christian institution, under some of the forms which professed disciples have assumed, would not have been recognized by the founders of primitive churches; and many established tests of Christian character would have excluded the apostles from the communion of saints.

Examine the schemes of divinity, which for centuries were presented to public view, and determine the amount of instruction, precept and motive that they furnish, calculated to enlighten the human mind, or improve the heart. The errors and corruptions, which ignorant or designing men have introduced into our religion, have occasioned bitterness, strife and division among disciples of a common Master.

Grecian philosophy and pagan rites were early blended with the divine principles and simple institutions of the gospel, and the effects which might have been foreseen, were produced by this adulteration. The spirit of our religion was thereby stifled, and its moral purpose in a great measure defeated. The Christian community was split into innumerable sects; it was rent by impassioned struggles for superiority; doubt and despondence were excited in many serious minds; and, by casuistical distinctions, even the moral precepts of the gospel lost much of their purity and power.

This state of things continued, till the whole Christian community was overwhelmed by the tyranny of the Papal

hierarchy. The fairest features of Christianity were then obscured; the dearest rights of conscience were invaded; and the charter of Christian privileges and standard of faith and practice, was secreted. A few ambitious individuals, styling themselves ecclesiastics, claimed a divine authority to settle the system of government, and the forms of worship in the Church; to explain all points of christian doctrine, and to regulate the consciences and the actions of every individual disciple. Our religion was then degraded, that by its principles it might authorize servile homage to usurped power; and debased, that by its exercises it might dazzle the imaginations and charm the senses of an illiterate generation; and the Christian world was oppressed by the heaviest burdens of spiritual bondage.

In what manner, were the corruptions and abuses successively introduced into the religion of Jesus Christ corrected? At the darkest period of Christianity, and amid the grossest errors, the light of truth occasionally appeared; individual men under the guidance of common sense and a sound understanding, brought prevalent errors and corruptions to the test of scripture, and they sunk under the trial; and though the restless imaginations of speculative theologians were fruitful in producing one wild and extravagant theory after another, yet human reason was found to possess sufficient clearness and strength to demonstrate, that these were inconsistent with the plain and obvious truths of the gospel; and in their gross forms they were in succession abandoned. In like manner, at the height of papal power, the eye of intelligence was no sooner directed to the explicit language of the inspired writers, than it was clearly perceived, that the abuses of this ecclesiastical domination did not more directly infringe the rights of conscience, than they violated the plain commands of Jesus, whose authority was impiously perverted to give them a sanction. As soon as the Christian oracles were examined, it was fully understood, that the servitude of the church was not more manifestly opposed to the sound maxims of reason, than it was expressly forbidden by the revelation of God.

Reason is of equal importance, in correcting the errors and corruptions of present times. While we lament their prevalence, we may place confidence in the redeeming spirit of our religion. If pure christianity survived the corruptions and violence of earlier times, if it has sustained life under all the

contradictions and absurdities with which in past ages it has been loaded, if it has recovered from wounds inflicted by its immoral and heartless friends, we need not fear its depression by errors and abuses which now abound ; but we may rest in the persuasion, that by the divine blessing these will be corrected, when soberly brought to the test of reason and scripture.

IN CONCLUSION.

Let us, my Christian friends, deeply impress on our minds the importance of religion to our highest interests. Let us not arrogate merit to ourselves on account of the Christian name, nor let us presume on divine acceptance, because we are favoured with a revelation of the divine will. Of what worth will the bible be to us, if it be not read. What advantage shall we derive from the possession of christian institutes, if they be not improved? Let us then enlighten our understandings by a faithful study of the oracles of truth, and ever act agreeably to the dictates of minds thus informed. Then, our hearts not condemning us, we may have confidence toward God.

PREFACE.

It is believed that the greater portion of the American public are acquainted with Unitarian Christianity chiefly, if not solely, through the medium of prejudice. Its adherents have been denounced; its principles, its tendencies, its books, its teachers, stigmatised as poisonous, ruinous, disorganizing, infidel, undermining revelation, and trampling upon the cross, injurious to society and fatal to the soul. Of those who might be willing, if respectfully invited, to judge for themselves, many, from their situation want the opportunity. The Liberal Preacher will supply all with the means of hearing. It in effect throws open the doors of our temples of worship even to the most distant. A voice from our pulpit may reach to every fireside. If it utters not the words of truth and faith and seriousness, breathes no right spirit, and conveys no glad tidings and saving influences to the hungry and perishing soul, let it speak no more.

The Liberal Preacher, while it would exert a proper influence on the present age, looks still further. Future generations may survey the present era of the Christian Church with a calmer interest. Existing controversies will then be tested by their merits, and party names and distinctions will be estimated by the *memorials* left be-

hind them. Sermons written in the course of professional duty, whether to unfold a truth, or to expose an error,—to root the latter from the understanding, and to plant the former in the heart,—are perhaps the best commentaries on tenets. The argument that convinces, and the eloquence that thrills now, will not lose strength or pathos by time. Let the Liberal Preacher exhibit a specimen of the pulpit labours, doctrinal and practical, of Unitarian Ministers, and the name which they bear will descend to after times as clear from the reproaches now cast upon it, as triumphant over the prejudice that gives them utterance, or haply the errors and the spirit that cherish it. EDITOR.

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SERMON X.

By Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY, New Bedford, Mass.

ON SECTARIANISM.

I Corinthians, iii. 3.

For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

From these words, you will anticipate the subject of my discourse. It is the spirit of sectarianism, which is here condemned, and against which I shall take the apostolic warrant for speaking freely. And let me add, that when I say this, I have not in my mind the idea of evil that attaches to some remote people, or some other people than ourselves. I do not mean to preach against the sectarian spirit of any particular sect or party. But I mean to preach against my own, and yours, and that of every body else. Sectarianism altogether and every where I would contend against.

But first let me endeavor to point out more particularly what I understand by a sectarian spirit. That those who think alike should value each other's opinion and society on that account, and so far as that consideration goes, is nothing surprising nor objectionable. This does not constitute them a sect. Men think alike on a great many subjects of business and of science without forming a party, for the promotion of their views.

Now what is it which will make of a number of per-

sons agreeing in opinion, a party or a sect?—for in showing how a party originates and grows up, we shall go some way towards defining it.

In the first place, the giving them a name will have a tendency to produce this result. A common name operates upon many minds as a kind of mutual pledge. There has been an extraordinary propensity in religious matters, to this giving of names. There cannot a dozen of men adopt a peculiar set of views, but forthwith they are denominated Hopkinsians, or Swedenborgians, or by some other title in the extended nomenclature of christian sects. Next to giving a name, in its tendency to form a sect, is opposition. This binds men together, and makes them act for the common defence. And then, when a name is fastened on a party, and an opposition is created, —then, a wide scope is given for passion and prejudice: then come dislike, anger, scorn, variance and slander.

From this account of the rise of sectarianism, you might expect it to be one of the discriminating features of a sect, that it would forsake general and generous considerations for those which are partial and limited; that its members would give up a portion of their individual freedom, to the creed or the conduct of the whole body. The question of the sectarian is not simply and only, what is true in faith or right in action, but what does the party believe, and what is expedient to be done for the party? This last question often involves a still worse; what are our *opponents* doing? and what shall *we* do to counteract them? So that the whole christian action of a country, if it can be called so, is often shaped and directed by these party considerations. And men verily think they are doing God service, when they are only laboring in the service of their own prejudices and passions.

This account of sectarianism, though very brief and general, may serve as a sufficient basis for the remarks which I have now to make upon it.

I. And the first remark I have to offer is, that *sects are not* NEEDED, *to answer the great purposes of christian action.*

The efforts of Christians to advance the progress of truth and virtue have so long flowed in these sectarian channels, that many, no doubt, imagine them to be necessary. It seems to be thought that these frail and artificial works of human device are the very safeguards and barriers of religion, and that, if the springs and fountains of religious influence were left to flow in their natural courses, they would waste themselves, as some of the African rivers have been supposed to do, in barren deserts: or else, that the stream of truth itself would become an overwhelming torrent of error. It has been adopted, as a maxim, because other worldly objects are so promoted, that for the advancement of *truth* and *virtue*, men must act in masses; that the cause of Christianity is to be urged onward, not by individual effort, but by a banded phalanx; that men must stand shoulder to shoulder and strive *together*, in this work. It has been deemed a much more powerful method of proposing religious truths or objects, to say "*we* believe thus and thus, and *we* ask your cooperation in such and such plans," relying on the authority of numbers, than for a man singly to say, "*I* believe this, and *I* judge that to be right," relying upon the simple reasonableness of the doctrine and the manifest expediency of the proposed measure. Nay, he who will stand aloof from all sects, who will be called by none of their names, and will bind himself to none of their measures, though giving perhaps the clearest proof of adherence to the great Christian Master, must look to have his very fidelity called in question: he will be scarcely a Christian in the general esteem; he will be little better than an infidel. At any rate he may look, in these days, to have no peace, though perhaps it is the very thing he seeks for, till he has declared of what sect or party he is. He can have no standing among Christians, till this is settled. His liberality will be regarded as a cloak for indifference to all religion. Men will not be easy, till with doubts, and questions and suspicions, they have ferreted out the imagined mystery and secret of his candor and impartial-

ity. In fact, he is so great an anomaly in these times, that the age must be pardoned for not being able to understand him.

Now, against this current of opinion, I shall venture to act so far on the principle I am defending, as to stand up, and, however feebly, to oppose myself. I do not believe in this supposed necessity of sectarian combinations to promote the cause of truth and virtue. I do not believe that a man to do the utmost good that he is able, need to enlist himself under the banner of any sect. I appeal to history. And I fearlessly assert, that the cause of christian truth has always been most effectually advanced, not by masses of men but by individuals. How was it originally? From one teacher in Judea, the light of truth went forth among the nations. Twelve men from the villages of Galilee, spread it through the Roman Empire. Look, again, at the Reformation. It was Luther, and Melancthon, and Zuinglius,—it was Luther almost alone, that gave the impulse, which has agitated all the moral elements of Christianity and shaken the whole mass of Christendom to its centre. The great Reformers, the great and master spirits of all ages, have not said, "*we* believe thus and thus;"—they have not been able to offer the sanction of numbers; they have not wanted it. The voice of truth has been one, solitary, self-moving power;—not enfeebled and dwindled by division and plurality, but single and supreme,—mighty in its individual force, strong in that reason of men to which it has appealed.

Nay more; it is when this individual voice, appealing to reason, has become the creed of many, appealing to authority—it is when parties have been formed and multitudes have followed in the reformer's path,—it is when men have leaned one upon another, and lost the freedom of individuals in the faith of numbers;—it is then, that the progress of truth has been stopped, and centuries of inaction and bondage have rolled on, till new Reformers arose to unseal again the fountains of religious light, and to arouse the spirit of tame acquiescence to inquiry and freedom.

And let it be remembered, that the argument I am pursuing, gains strength with every advance which the world makes in education, in reading, and general intelligence. If, in a darker and ruder age, truth was strong and did of itself prevail, it would be mere faintheartedness to distrust it now. If, in the childhood of intellect, when it had greater need to be led, it did nevertheless answer to the simple call of truth, unaided by any authority or combination, can it not be trusted in that nearer approach which the world has now made to its manhood and maturity?

What I have thus far said, relates, it is true, to but one department of christian action,—to the promotion of truth. But the same remarks apply to religious exertion in all its forms. I allow that combinations for certain objects may be expedient. Christian congregations, Missionary societies, Book and Tract associations are of this nature. But they need not be *sectarian* combinations. They need not be actuated by a sectarian spirit. There is no reason in the nature of things, why all Christians—Christians of every sect, may not harmoniously unite in these associations. The passions and prejudices of different sects may divide them, but their true and real interests do not put them asunder. Their real interests are the same. The interests of virtue and goodness, of morality and devotion, are forever the same. It is here, that all sects stand upon common ground. And they may as well truly love one another, and desire each other's good, they may be as ready to see and acknowledge each other's good qualities, as if they were all of the same sect.

It may be said, that thus speaking we condemn ourselves. Perhaps we do. I am not anxious to deny the inference. I am afraid of a sectarian spirit among ourselves. I have no more pleasure in this spirit among Unitarians, than among any other Christians. I fear that it does prevail among us, that it has an undue and unhappy prevalence in our churches, our Missionary societies and Tract associations. I speak as I do, if I may be allowed to say so, for our own admonition.

But I should do injustice to the Unitarian Body, if I did not also,—having said thus much—if I did not also, speak for its defence. We have been *compelled* to take separate ground. We would have lived, and associated, and communed with our fellow Christians, as brethren, but they would not suffer us. We did, indeed, differ with them in opinion, but we did not deny their sincerity or virtue, nor cast contempt upon their hope of heaven. We did not seek for strife nor division, but our language was "let there be peace between you and us." We did not utter a word *in our own defence*, till, by the most aggravated provocation, we were compelled to do it. It is, if I mistake not, a singular distinction of the Unitarian Body among modern sects, that it did not originate in a sectarian spirit.

But although it did not originate in this spirit, yet, being a separate body, it is sufficiently liable to entertain it. It is for this reason, among others, that I have chosen to make it a subject of particular discourse.

II. Having therefore shown the needlessness of a sectarian spirit, I shall now proceed, in the second place, to point out some of its evils.

In speaking of these evils I need not revert to former times. I need not show what the spirit of sectarianism has been. It has been indeed a spirit of war in the Christian Church, and it has deluged more than one country with the blood of Christians.

But the sectarian spirit is still at war with a pure and generous philanthropy, with true Christianity, and with the real freedom and enlargement of the human mind.

1. It is at war with a pure and generous philanthropy, with a wide and expansive love of human kind.

This is taught us by the light of nature. And I am not sure but those who lived under that light, inculcated the sentiment, if they did not enforce the practice, of universal love to a greater extent than we do. The old Roman indifference to all the varieties of Religion which were embraced in the Empire, has been a topic of christian

scorn and reproach, that might better have been reserved for our own heinous and hateful dissensions.

It is not of the evil of these dissensions, however, that I am now speaking, but of the hostility that exists between the sectarian spirit and all generous philanthropy. The thorough-going sectarian looks not only upon his fellow Christians but upon mankind at large, with a cold and scornful feeling. That affection to men as such, which should go abroad to the ends of the earth, moves in the circle of his own party. What cares he for Pagans and Mahometans, for Hindoos, Monguls, Tartars? They are not of his religion, and he scarcely feels as if they were of his kind. "Nay, but does he not send Missionaries to them?" Yes, he sends Missionaries, but for what purpose? Why, to convert the people, to convert them to Christianity, to convert them not so much to goodness—that is what he is not thinking of—not so much to goodness and happiness, as to convert them to his religion. Yes, "the mission all divine," of spreading christian light and hope, is often made a selfish and, essentially, a sectarian business. This it is that has tarnished the glory of the Roman Catholic Missions, whose great end was accomplished if Pagans would bow to the outward cross and acknowledge the authority of the Pope. And this, too, has left its stains upon Protestant Missions, whose object has been, too often and too much, to force upon reluctant Heathens a sectarian creed.

Nay, more—Christianity itself, not merely in its propagation, but in the very spirit with which it has been regarded, has but too commonly been made a sectarian institution. There is a style of speaking about heathens—a tone of boasting and scorn, which is wholly at war both with general philanthropy and the spirit of the Gospel. If a man would seek out the most odious and scornful term to apply to his fellow, he calls him a *heathen*. This putting of more than three quarters of the human race under the ban of indiscriminate reprobation and contempt, is to pursue a course as hostile to all kind, generous and

christian feeling as can well be imagined. It is the very spirit as well as language of the ferocious and blood-thirsty Crusaders. We are forbidden by the spirit of the age, from waging actual war against Mahometans and Pagans, as such, but we send out spears and arrows in our words, in our current modes of speech. Would it not be a fine method, think you, of converting Moslem and Heathen, to let them into the spirit of our literature and conversation? "No," might they say, "we wish not to be converted to a religion of uncharitableness and scorn!"

And the evil of this sectarian prejudice is so much the worse, its spirit is so much the more wrong and unjustifiable and odious, as religion is the great, if not the only bond of universal candor and love. It is the last subject into which any sectarian feeling should be admitted. In many of their social relations men must be divided, and must have separate and local interests. Of families, and communities and nations, this is true. But religion is a subject on which all men's interest is the same. Religion was designed to be the great bond of human society—to unite all men in the love of a common Father in Heaven, and in the love of one another,—to cause them to feel that they are all brethren of one family, and to regard each other, not as belonging to different sects, and tribes, and nations, but as belonging to that one family. This universal bond of piety and love, the sectarian rudely and impiously breaks asunder.

I have now spoken of the first and most obvious evil of sectarianism—its hostility to a pure and generous philanthropy.

2. I shall proceed next to show its hostility to the christian religion.

It is one grand peculiarity of this religion, distinguishing it from all grosser and more ceremonial systems, that it regards men as individuals, that it is not a matter of ritual or an engine of state, but a subject of personal and individual thought and feeling, that it singles out a man from the multitude, and proposes to commune with him alone.

Sectarianism, on the contrary, blends the man with the multitude. It sinks the individual mind in the spirit and creed of the many.

But it is of the hostility of this influence to the refined, liberal and intellectual character of Christianity that I intend more particularly to speak. "For while," says the Apostle, "for while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" Sectarianism is a mechanical form of Christianity, unworthy of its divine candor and liberality. It is carnal and not spiritual. It is not the intellectual in character, but the rude and unrefined.

The sectarian spirit, so far as it goes, partakes of the very genius of barbarism. It is hostile, not only to all philanthropic, but especially to all christian regard for our fellow men. It is a spirit of clanship and war. He who dwells on the other side, not of a river or mountain, but of a far more imaginary line of distinction, is regarded as an alien if not an enemy. He is of another tribe. He is an Infidel, or a Schismatic, or a Heathen, and we will have nothing to do with him. The kind feeling of the sectarian runs to the separating border, and there stops. All beyond is distrust, dislike, caution and contempt.

I speak not at random, nor without warrant. The old relationship between those ancient sects, the Jews and Samaritans, is actually revived in some of our christian communities. There are sects which "have no dealings" with each other. There are those, who will *buy*, but of their own party. The trader, the mechanic, the farmer, that they deal with, must if possible be of their sect. Thus is there revived and nurtured, in the bosom of our christian communities, a state of society, as barbarous in principle, as that of the wild Highlanders of the last century. I say, of the last century; for thanks to the refinement and intelligence of the present day, those Scottish clanships are in a good measure broken up. But the age, which will not allow of one kind of clanship and coalition, we see, but too well, may admit another. Refine-

ment does not do away the vices of the human character, but oftentimes, only changes their form.

But sectarianism is not only opposed to christian refinement and generosity; it is equally opposed to christian truth. We hear much about truth, I know, and about uniting for its defence. But does truth, does Heaven's truth need a coalition, and a multitude, and a shout to support it?—Can it be put to vote, and decided by the majority? Can it depend on being registered in a creed, and written down on frail parchment, and on its compelling the unreflecting multitude to say, "we believe—we believe thus and thus," with the solemn stupidity of men who know and care nothing about it? I ask you, I ask any reasonable man, do you think the acclamation of the whole British people worth half so much as the single judgment of their Milton, their Locke, or their Paley?—Do you think the mumbling of ten thousand confessions, in their Churches, worth as much as one solitary hour's investigation in the study of Newton? Talk no more, then, of a combination, for the promotion of the truth. It will promote the cause of a party, and that is all that it will promote. Truth disdains a coalition. It has never come amidst a crowd. It has come amidst the deep and retired studies of sages and reformers. It has broken upon the ear of hoary prophets in the solitary cave, or the waste wilderness. It has answered to the midnight prayer of the Son of God. It has been heard in the still small voice from the rent mountain, or it has issued from the cloud, that overshadowed the mercy seat. It has dwelt between the awful cherubim, or it has descended among the silent tents of the mount of transfiguration. And never has this heavenly visitant that courts solitude and silence—never, alas! has it come into the crowd of men but it has been degraded and dishonored.

It will be so now. Make Christianity a National Institution, which is making but a larger Sect, and that moment all the curses of formality, hypocrisy, and intolerance, all these vials of wrath without mixture, will be poured

out upon it. Commit religion, or what is fancied to be religious truth, to the fostering and plighted care of a great and powerful combination, and, from that moment, all its sublimity is brought down to the meanness of a party affair. Every thing will be seen through a party medium. Every thing will be measured by party convenience. And what, then, would you give for the religious thought, worth and dignity of such a people? Do you ever see this nation thrown into violent *political* parties, without feeling that the political judgment of nine out of ten among the people, was worth nothing, and without feeling, too, that the tone of political virtue was essentially lowered? It will be so,—if the spirit of party grows as it has done of late—it will be so in religion. The religious character of the country will be degraded. The people will be degraded. There will be much and large talk, indeed, about a grand, extended, and consolidated system to put down error and misrule—fine, sounding words—and many will feel as if it was a grand thing to belong to this system;—but, after all, the people will be degraded! and the christian religion will be degraded in their persons! It will not be the Christianity of such a land that is destined to unfold, and to lift up on high, the majesty and beauty of the divine, original system.

I speak with no unkindness towards the zealous of any sect who may act this miserable part. I will not question their motives. I presume they think that they are opposing error. So we all think. We are all opposing error; and through the very goodness of our intentions, we are blind to the tendency of our measures. I know that we all offer, and, I doubt not, sincerely offer the plea of conscience for what we do. But, so have zealots of every religion under heaven, been, no doubt, sincere and conscientious. It has always been the vice and mischief of the order that they thought they were "doing God service." So have despotic popes, and persecuting pagans, and burning inquisitors, been sincere and conscientious. Yes, and they have been contending for the truth, too. Their cry

has been, "the Church, the Church is in danger!"—or, "great is Diana of the Ephesians:" and for my own part, I have just as much respect for the one cry as for the other. I fear not to be so true to my own principles, as to extend that charity to a man who is called a pagan, which I do not withhold from a man who is called a Christian. Both are wrong. Both are to be condemned. And the latter, the christian sectarian, is to be called to account for doing what he can to degrade the noblest of all the forms and revelations of truth. He will not suffer Christianity, he will not suffer the Gospel, to be that lofty, generous, pure and intellectual system which it is, but will rest it on party creeds and combinations. He will not trust its single, spiritual and divine power, but will call in grosser aids—the authority of great names and the force of numbers.

I have said, that the spirit of sectarian ambition and cooperation dishonors the truth, which it professes to support. But it does more. It dishonors, it degrades the mind.

3. This it does, as I proposed to show, in the third place, by taking away its proper and principal distinction, —I mean its freedom. Every thing else on earth, animate or inanimate, receives the *passive* impression of God's power. It is man's great prerogative to receive it actively, to be willing in the day of his power—to be subject, not to blind tradition, not to human authority, not to sectarian compacts and combinations, but to be subject to reason, to conscience, to God, alone. Subjection to them is not slavery, but freedom. Any other subjection *is* slavery, though it wear golden fetters or a golden crown.

It is the greatness of a mind, if I understand it—it is the distinguishing peculiarity of a rational creature to be governed, freely and purely, by intellectual considerations, to rest on great principles, to stand up in a noble independence of what this man says or that man says, to think, to feel, to act from one's self, unaided by the sanction, unawed by the frown of the multitude. This has

been the greatness, the courage, the freedom of the noble Reformers and guiding Lights of the world. All other reasoning, all other virtue, however sincere and earnest, is earthly and "carnal." It is the reasoning and virtue of a child and not of a man. It may suit the infancy, but it is not fit for the manhood of the world.

Now, he who gives in his adherence to a sect, gives up a portion of this individual and noble freedom. In every path, where his investigations lead him, he is met by the lines, which his creed or his party has drawn for him. He may not have made a subscription—though multitudes do this—but he may not have done this; he may not have actually sworn that he will believe this, or believe that, but the very circumstance of his having bound himself to a sect—nay, let us state it more strongly—the very fact that he *belongs* to a sect, will almost certainly and to a certain extent, act upon him as a pledge. In all his religious inquiries, in every christian enterprise, the consideration of the party will be present with him. He will be cautious of offending those, with whom he is expected to cooperate. He will shrink from falling into what, he is told, is the insignificance of a solitary and disconnected individual. He will not act for, and from, himself. He will not act from those free, generous and large views, which his own mind suggests to him. His mind will never do its duty, will never bequeath its light to the world. Of how many theologians might it be said, as of the illustrious British Statesman, and with far more justice,

"They to *party* gave up, what was meant for mankind."

I have now mentioned one way, by which the sectarian spirit hinders the freedom of the mind; and that is, by subservience to a party. But there is a counterpart to this feeling, which is even worse, and that is, the undue consideration of an opposing party, the spirit of competition and rivalship, the blindly pursuing of measures, in imitation or counteraction of our opponents. This, I say, is a worse bondage than the former. It is being subject,

not to sectarian friends, which might have a feeling of worldly honor and fidelity to support it, but it is being subject to sectarian enemies. It has, therefore, not even the merit of a bravado; it is sheer cowardice. The man, who adopts any measures, simply because his adversaries are pursuing them, has not only entered into a workhouse, and appointed to himself taskmasters, but his taskmasters are his foes, and the workhouse is not his own, but another man's.

Concerning any measure or project the great and only question to be asked is—"Is the thing right? will it do good? will it tend to spread light and truth?" And just so far as a man swerves from these questions, just so far as he acts from motives extraneous and foreign to these questions, does he forsake the pure and intellectual consideration of his duties, and subject himself to the bondage of persons, and parties, and of projects not his own.

But, it may be said, "shall we not be governed by circumstances?" I allow that the discrimination must needs be something acute. But you all know, that the zeal of the eager and heated sectarian does not appear in a fair and calm consideration of circumstances, but his imagination is occupied with hostile measures and persons, with opponents and adversaries. He cannot, as has been acutely said of a fictitious personage, he cannot "embrace a general and abstract idea, but his notions of things are always personified" into individuals. He is thinking of this man and that man, or of bodies of men, that are opposed to him. He is thinking, not of great principles to be discussed, but of a great combination to be resisted, or of a great array of force to be put down. He wants to build up, not truth purely, but his congregation or his sect. He wants to array societies, and accumulate funds, and make reports, and have public meetings, and deliver speeches, and gain adherents, and multiply members. He wants to *talk* about all these things, and to make a fair show of them on paper. This is his ambition; to succeed, to prosper, to supplant, to overcome, to put down. All

his ideas of religion and religious action are associated with these petty and selfish aims. His notions of that which is spiritual and infinite, are all personal and limited. His plans, with regard to that which is eternal, are ever temporizing. "Will this be best, and will that be best in *the present state of things?* Will this plan be likely to succeed, or will that measure be good policy? Would it not be expedient to have more meetings?—or would it not be well to be a good deal among the people?—or, cannot such a man or woman be brought over by a little timely attention?"

I will not stop with this general description. We see the effect of this Sectarian spirit. The public mind in a considerable portion of this country is thrown into an unnatural state, a state that ought to be *most* unnatural to freemen, by sectarian zeal. Almost every thing in religion is turned awry, by this party excitement, and it is becoming more and more so every day. The good old ways of religious influence are made to yield to those which are more ostentatious and more immediately exciting, which carry with them more noise and eclat. Zealots and busy bodies are found, not here and there as formerly, but everywhere. They are spreading themselves over the land, always on the alert, always inquiring about their neighbors, and thinking too little about themselves. Not one sect or another, but all sects, more or less, are infected with this madness. Individual character is lost in publicity, and in the crowd of plans, and projects and associations. Individual freedom is lost in compacts and combinations. There is no chance left, for a man quietly to remain apart and alone, thinking for himself, subjected to no ordeal but his own judgment, and uniting with his fellow Christians only in kind conversation and the good works of daily charity and love. I say, there is no place for such a man. The clergy, too, are forsaking their studies, and becoming out-of-door men. They are taken up with preachings, and meetings, and societies and anniversaries, and visitings among their parishioners; and vis-

iting them, too, not as if they were visiting friends, but adherents and partisans; and deep thought, and liberal investigation, and sound learning must decline in such a state of things. The age, we live in, is called, I know, the age of benevolence,—the age of benevolent and christian effort. And I admit that there is much good in this awakened spirit of christian action. But it is marred, to an afflicting degree, by the sectarian spirit, which supplies so large a share of the impulse.

I must do myself the justice, to add that I do not, or endeavor not, to say all this, *as* a sectarian. I do not exempt my own sect—alas! if it is such—from their part in the faults of the times. I fear, that this spirit is infecting the Unitarian Body—a Body that originated in other influences. I fear that, by some, measures are taken in the spirit of competition. The measures may be well enough, and on this point I would not be misunderstood. In the present extraordinary state of things in India, for instance, I believe in the expediency of directing our views and efforts to that country. There can be no doubt, I think, of the propriety of supplying with religious instruction some feeble and destitute societies in our own country. There certainly can be no doubt of the propriety of Tract and Book Associations. But, I pray God to preserve them from all narrow and sectarian views! I have seen enough to awaken a just solicitude on this point. I have heard too much in conversation that savored of this character. And in some of our public meetings, I have heard, more than I wished, about the necessity of erecting citadels and outworks for our defence—too many illustrations drawn from camps and armies, and a state of war. I cannot bear to have any measure proposed to me and urged by the consideration that our opponents are doing the same thing, or that it is necessary to do something to counteract them. If a thing is right, let me do it, and let me do it, because it is right. That is reason enough. Let me do it, and continue to do it, whatever others do. Away with all temporizing, in matters of eter-

nal truth and interest! I abhor it. I will not submit my mind to work in this harness, nor to draw this car, nor to run this race of sectarian zeal. I want more freedom than this would imply, and I will have it.

I can easily conceive that language of this sort may be thought to be very *impolitic*. If any man should make this objection, let me tell him it is this very objection that I should inveigh against, most of all. It is a great and prevailing mistake—a mistake savoring more of sectarianism than any thing else, that a man is obliged to defend every thing connected with his party, or to confess nothing to its detriment.

The general system of opinions, and the circle of christian virtues that are embraced within this name, I do, indeed, prefer to any other, but I cannot defend all that is called Unitarianism. Who, but the most ignorant of bigots and sectarians, would undertake so comprehensive a task concerning any sect? For myself, I must decline it. I will not have a man say to me, "Such and such Unitarians say or do such and such things, and it is a dark sign against you." It is nothing to me—i. e. personally—it is nothing to me, what another man says or does, because he is a Unitarian. You might as well call upon me to defend every thing *human* because I am a *man*; or every thing that Christians have said and done, because I am a Christian. There is a sect—no, it is *not* a sect—but there is a body of the liberal and good, and to such, if I were worthy, I would join myself; ay, and I would defend them and plead for them. They are of all sects, Trinitarians and Unitarians, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, and Catholics, and Quakers,—and I hope they will come out from all sects, and freely love one another for their virtues, and honor one another for their consciences, and respect each other for their honest and independent opinions. The intelligence and virtue of the world must yet come to this. It cannot be forever bound in these trammels of creed and party. It cannot forever endure this bondage of dogmas and distinctions. The

thoughts and feelings of the world must yet have a broader channel and a freer course.

Let there be controversy. That is a different thing. It is probably a necessary thing. It is undoubtedly useful. So far from complaining and mourning about it, I welcome it,—though not its too common spirit,—as a cause of good. That, I say, is a different thing from what I object against. Controversy is the contest of mind with mind. It is an intellectual business. It enforces no bonds of mental servitude. But this banding and herding of men together in sects and parties, is what a liberal and intelligent age ought not much longer to endure. It is mechanical and slavish. It is the rudeness and barbarism of religious investigation. It is the feudal age of Christianity. So shall it not be, with the word of the Lord. It shall "have free course and be glorified." So shall it not be with the mind. It shall go forth and abroad, beyond all sectarian boundaries. It must have this "free course" or it can never "be glorified" in that liberty and enlargement to which it is destined.

SERMON I.

BY REV. ORVILLE DEWEY, NEW BEDFORD, MASS

WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION, A PRACTICAL WORK.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 12, 13.—WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION, WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING; FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.

THE subject of the following discourse is the agency which man has, in becoming virtuous and pious, or in obtaining his salvation. The doctrine of the divine influence, which is taught in the latter clause of the text, I do not propose now to discuss, only incidentally and as it is connected with the subject which I have chosen. For the present, I wish to fix attention on this single expression; 'work out your own salvation.' Language could not more emphatically describe the necessity of individual exertion in this matter. '*Work* out your salvation.' Something, then, is to be done to gain this blessing. 'Work out your *own* salvation.' Something is to be done by each individual being for himself. But here, perhaps, there meets us on the very threshold a misgiving;—a disposition to qualify this, if not to question it. 'Something—true, something is to be done; we must use the means; we must put ourselves in the way of being religious; we must wish for salvation.' Nay, says the Apostle, 'work *out* your salvation;' do

it entirely; complete the work. *He* had none of this modern scruple about human ability. Shall I be reminded, that he teaches, in this very verse, the doctrine of the divine influence? Nay, I say again, *not* as depreciating human ability—*not* as discouraging human endeavor, does he teach it, but as enforcing his precept that we should work—'*for*,' says he, work out your own salvation, *for* it is God that worketh within you. Be assiduous, be laborious, be thorough in this undertaking, especially, *because* God will help you.

I. But let me explain a little, in the first place, what I understand by working out our own salvation; what is meant by man's agency in the matters of religion. It is not meant, certainly, that we should think to gain salvation, by our own *merit;* for it is the gift of the mercy of God. It is not meant, that we should use any ceremonies, or make any offerings, or believe in any doctrines, as being of themselves meritorious or efficacious to procure salvation; for Christ our passover is slain for us, and has superseded all such superficial, ceremonial reliances. Neither is it meant that we should expect to gain salvation by our *unassisted* endeavors; for we are weak and dependent creatures in all our efforts, and it becomes us to feel this especially in the high and difficult and solemn concerns of religion. But I do understand from the words of the text, that the salvation of the soul depends on our own efforts, in this sense at least,—that he who sincerely strives for it will certainly be saved, and that he who does not strive for it will certainly be lost. I do understand from it, that final salvation, or future happiness is granted to nothing but purity of mind or holiness, which holiness can no more be obtained without our

own effort, than knowledge can be obtained without our own effort; that a man might as well sit down idly, and expect to be a philosopher without exertion, as to sit down idly, and expect to be a Christian without exertion; that a supernatural influence is no more likely to help his indolence in one case, than the other; that sloth in spiritual things is just as ruinous to our inward welfare, as sloth in worldly things is ruinous to our outward welfare. I do understand from it, that no scheme of redemption, no offer of mercy, nor grace of election; no power of faith, nor promise of perseverance, nor covenanted faithfulness; no altars heaped with the slain, no blood of atonement, no costly rites, nor splendid masses, nor lofty privileges; no, nor even the superabounding mercy of the Almighty, will ever save that man *who does nothing for himself*. I believe that there is a feast provided, but, then, I do understand from the very nature of the figure, that no one can be benefited by it unless he partake of it; that there is a treasure of life, but then, it is a treasure to be gained and guarded; that there is a salvation, but then it is a salvation to be wrought out.

II. Let us see now in the second place if this is not the manifest dictate of all that we know about religion, and of all that we are taught about it.

What is religion, itself? If it were some inexplicable state of mind, we might suppose that it was to be obtained in some inexplicable manner. If it were a mystery, (i. e. if it were more a mystery than everything else; there is mystery in everything;) then we might regard it as the product of a peculiarly mysterious power. If it were something which man could not comprehend, we might conclude that it was something which man could

not cultivate. But what is it? What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God? What *is* religion, but to be humble, and penitent, and pure in heart, and watchful against sin; to be compassionate to the miseries, and faithful to the duties of life, and to its solemn destination? Now how does any one acquire these dispositions, and fulfil these duties? How shall any one whose mind is full of impure thoughts, and sensual desires; or who is selfish, covetous, and worldly in all his aims,—how shall he attain to the purity, and generosity and loftiness of the christian character? Is he to be carried up to this third heaven, in a trance, or in a chariot of fire? or is he to ascend by the slow and rugged steps of virtuous endeavor? Is it in vision; or is it in reality, that he is to ascend? How shall a man of hasty and violent passions, acquire the control of his temper, and become kind and meek, and lowly in heart?—how, but by strong effort, and constant care? How in short, from the very nature of things—how shall any man be a Christian but by desiring and praying and striving to be such? I am not saying that he is independent in this—far from it; but I am saying that he must be active and vigilant; that he must use the powers which God has given him.

Obvious and unquestionable as this view of the subject is, there are many minds on which it has not made its fair and full impression; and this is my apology for dwelling upon it. We are apt to receive it with caution and distrust. We are afraid of attributing too much to human ability. We grew up perhaps, with the impression that we could do nothing ourselves, and though our speculations may now be right, our impressions may still be wrong, or at least defective.

Let us see, then, if our Saviour and his Apostles had any of this hesitation about the powers and obligations of men. Look then, after having considered the nature of religion itself, look at the precepts and doctrines of its teachers. Look at their precepts. 'Labor for the meat that endureth unto eternal life—strive to enter in at the strait gate—watch and pray—seek ye first and principally the kingdom of heaven—be ye followers of God, as dear children.' But why should I repeat these, when whole chapters and books of our scriptures might be quoted to the same purpose?

Yes,—it is said, often,---'these things could I do if first a new heart were given me.' Now, not to say that *every* precept of the bible requires a new heart in him whose heart is wrong, in the sight of God, what saith the scripture to those very persons who offer this plea for indolence—'MAKE YOU a new heart and a new spirit.'

Observe the *manner* of the Apostles' teaching. See every where the pervading spirit of zeal, persuasion, argument, urgency. See them plying every consideration, every motive, every blessed hope, every tremendous fear to induce men *to act*. See the care, and labor, and anxiety of these men. Hear them warning their converts lest they should fall away,—not preaching whole sermons to show that they could not fall away, as has often been done in later times. What could be farther from their instructions than the modern practice of telling men that they can do nothing; that they labor under a total, or moral, or any other, inability! Often, indeed, did they tell their converts that it was through the merciful kindness and the gracious power of God that they enjoyed all their privileges, their hopes,

their experience. Often did they tell them that they were weak and dependent creatures, and that God would assist their endeavors. Often did they tell them—and how natural that they should do it with warmth and earnestness! that man *of himself* was nothing; that he owed all to his Maker. Who would not constantly remember this? Who would forget, that God giveth life and breath and all things, soul and mind and might, piety and hope and eternal happiness? Still you find the men who taught these things, urging their fellow men to repent and lead a holy life, just as if everything depended on their urging. You find them crossing seas, traversing continents, and exhorting men to repent just or if they expected to persuade them—and to persuade them, by reasons, by motives, by inducements, to act—pleading with them as if they expected to *prevail* by pleading.

Observe, once more, the manner in which these men taught the most abstract doctrines of religion. In their hands, doctrines every where become arguments for a holy life. I have already remarked that the doctrine of divine influence in our text, is taught as an encouragement to exertion and not a dissuasive from it. And the doctrines concerning God's nature and attributes are used to awaken awe and love and obedience towards him; and that of man's wickedness, to persuade him to forsake it—to labor for release from it. And there is no doctrine of the perseverance of saints, that I am aware of, but this—that good men persevere in being good. And the doctrine of election, we hear of, in terms like these—'wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Behold now, this unalterable decree of election—that was settled in

the counsels of heaven ages before we were born—that heaven and earth cannot turn from its accomplishment; behold it not yet enough fixed, not yet enough certain, but to be made sure. And how? To be made sure by the diligence of man! When shall we learn that we have nothing to do with the unfathomable counsels of God, and everything to do with the yet unfathomed motives, principles, disguises, weaknesses, errors and sins of our own hearts?

I have not time to enter farther at present into the doctrines of the New Testament. But I am certain, if you examine, that you will find nothing there to entertain the curious or to gratify the indolent, you will not find an argument, but if pursued out, it will bear on the practice. You will find nothing even of discussion, but it points to the conscience and the life. And the motto on every page will be, '*action*—live well, and it shall be well with you.'

III. Having thus explained, and supported by argument the precept of the text, I shall endeavor to show what bearing it has on some of the practical sentiments of men concerning the way of obtaining salvation. We may find that the precept has a wider application than has been commonly imagined. Indeed, it is, as I think, against this precise character of religion and condition of salvation, which has been exhibited—it is against this laborious and patient and faithful *doing* of the commandments—it is against this careful maintenance of pure affections and good works, that the wickedness of men has always made objections, and the ingenuity of men has always framed devices. Evasion, or hostility towards this strict and unwelcome requisition, you will find to mark the error of every false religion and

the imperfection of every faulty religion. For this, the Pagan has substituted sacrifices and self-inflicted tortures; the Jew, his ceremonies and his fancied monopoly of the divine favor, the Papist, his indulgences, and the Mahometan, the bloody trophies of his sword. Any thing have men been willing to do, for heaven but that which is required to be done—anything but to *work out* their salvation. They would buy it; they would fight for it; they would suffer for it; they would die to gain it;—anything but to live for it. Any pain have they been willing to undergo but the pain of self-reproach, any warfare, but against their sins, any expense but what it would cost them to subdue their evil passions. It would be strange, if the taint of this universal propensity had not descended to later times. And something of this we may doubtless find in the errors of Protestantism. We may find it in the idea of *conversion* as an entire and miraculous change produced upon the passive mind, without any agency of man—in the idea of election, as designating the heirs of heaven 'without any foresight of good works in them;' in the Antinomian view of faith as all-sufficient—as superseding the necessity of obedience and good works.

These views are now rapidly passing away from the systems of reflecting men of all parties, though it is to be feared not so rapidly from the apprehensions of those, who in the business of life have less leisure for reflection. There is still a stress laid by many on the divine mercy and the divine influence which is opposed to the strict demands of active virtue and piety.

With regard to the divine mercy, it is maintained by some that it is impeached if it is restricted by any condition; that God is too indulgent to require any works

on our part; that he will certainly save us whether we choose it or not; that while he offers the gift of life, he does not ask of us the trouble even to stretch out our hand and receive it.

And that the doctrine of divine influence is abused to the purpose of spiritual indolence, I believe I might refer you for proof to the feelings of multitudes. If you would be convinced, go urge upon any one, trained up in the prevailing views of religion,—urge upon him the obligation to repent and to enter the christian path at once; press the entreaty upon his reason and conscience; press it upon him as you would upon a disobedient child to repent, or a dishonest dealer to make restitution; insist that he ought to repent and resolve on better things now; that it is just as much his duty to be religious as to be moral, to be devout as to be industrious; just as much his duty to pray as to labor in his vocation; do all this, and it is likely that he would look upon you with the utmost surprize, and would seriously ask 'if it was possible you could be in earnest.' If you followed the Apostolic example, you would tell him that most certainly you were in earnest; and you would urge him anew—you would press every argument—you would describe the affecting, the unchangeable, the instant obligation of every being to love and obey his Creator—you would tell him that happiness and worth and heaven depended on it. And what now do you suppose he would answer? How would he evade every weighty argument and every solemn obligation? Why, he would tell you plainly that he could not be a Christian—that he could not have a new heart, till it was given him—that being industrious and being pious were very different things—that he had powers

for the one, but not for the other, that religion was all the work of God. O false and fatal plea! unreasonable and ungrateful plea!—false, for God does not require what he does not give the power to perform,—fatal, for assuredly God will never help him who does nothing for himself,—unreasonable and ungrateful, for it turns God's mercy and gracious encouragement into arguments for supineness and stupidity; it causes that which should nourish and should heal us, to poison and to destroy. He who refuses to do any thing for his salvation because God graciously offers to assist him acts just as unreasonably as a drowning man who should sullenly refuse to do any thing for himself, because assistance is offered. He first calls for help, and replies to his terrified friends that he can do nothing without aid. Aid is offered, and then, forsooth, he will do nothing, because he is helped. First, the want of divine assistance is an argument for religious indolence; and then, the offer of it is perverted to the same bad use.

But are these the only mistakes on this subject? Are there not others, not so flagrant, indeed, but equally fatal? You have escaped some errors perhaps, and thank God that you are not as other men. You have escaped from the spirit that substitutes penance for piety, and sacrifice for obedience, and the divine influence in the place of your own endeavors; but have you not escaped too from the spirit of faithful zeal and devotedness which the gospel requires? You may observe the Sabbath, and be regular at church, and go through the mechanical round of forms and duties, and even may entertain some devout sentiments; and yet—working out your salvation, striving, earnest praying, anxious

watchfulness, a faithful keeping of the heart, may have entered little into your thoughts, and less into your experience. You have a kind of religion, perhaps which consists in resting rather than in working—which is easy, and mechanical and cold, which is respectful and decent, and has a name to live while it is dead. But is this the religion that fell from the lips of the divine Teacher, in solemn precepts and anxious warnings? Is this the religion of the fervent Apostles and affectionate Christians of former days? Is this the religion of contrition and fear and carefulness and self-denial, of a tender conscience, and an earnest hope and an abundant joy, and above all of a patient and prayerful endeavor? And yet, my brethren, these are the characters of the religion of the gospel; and if you have them not, you have no part nor lot in a religion that is adapted to erring and tempted and offending creatures.

And if it is true that we cannot, let me say, it is equally true, that we ought not to obtain salvation without earnest endeavor. By every rule of earthly acquisition we ought not. Point me to one theatre even of the interests of this life, where there is not effort and toil. Every where, and for every thing, there is working;—there is working in the bustling city—there is working in the furrowed soil—and amidst the plowed billows of the ocean there is working;—and for wealth and for fame, and for pleasure, there is perpetual and wearisome toil; and shall it be thought too much to be required, that we should work out our own salvation? Can we not gain the smallest parcel of this poor earth, without laboring for it; and then can we not render it productive without labor, and shall we expect to gain the inheritance of eternal happiness at a lighter

expense? Who, then, will make this seasonable and needful endeavor? Would to God that such and many such might be found among us! When shall we find men as thoughtful of the mind as of the body, as faithful to their souls as to their outward good, as heedful to their salvation as to their estate?—When shall the children of light, be as wise as the children of this world? When shall it once be? I know not when it will be. I tremble lest with many—with some who hear me—it should never be. But one thing I am sure of, that when they use this wisdom—when they make this endeavor, their salvation will have begun; and while they persevere in this wisdom and endeavor, their salvation will be secure; and if they are ever lost, it will only be because they would not perseveringly endeavor to be saved?

Christians! ye must work. That is the law aud the discipline of the christian Master. That was his example, and that is the faith in him, and that is the true perseverance of saints, and that is the only assured and certian election, and that alone is the legitimate fruit and effect of redeeming prayers and blood.

Ye must work. A form of outward decency meets not the requisition. Within, within, there must be a work, a toil, a care unceasing. The sun must not more regularly call you to your daily occupations, than it must call you to this inward endeavor, to this keeping of the heart. Do you know any thing of this? Do you know any thing of this daily conflict with your passions, of this daily subduing of evil desires, of vows and prayers each day going forth to meet the perils of this great moral-strife. Alas! there may be those who hear me who scarcely know yet that they have any foes. You think of the vicious and profligate, of the slaves of

lucre, of the victims of corrupt ambition, of the children of folly, fashion and vanity, and you feel that they have a work to do; but you think not of those principles within yourselves which constantly threaten to lead you to one or another of these very excesses, and that assuredly will lead you to them unless they are strenuously resisted and incessantly guarded;—nay more, which may already have lead you to some of these fatal habits of feeling or indulgences of sense—for it is often the most confirmed evil in the soul that is least suspected.

Once more I say, to all who would be saved from the thronging and threatening dangers of a sinful world, ye must work out your salvation. Nothing less will do for you. Nothing will do for your hearts, but keeping them. Nothing will do for your propensities, but resisting them. Nothing will do for your temptations but overcoming them. The world is the very field for this great endeavor. This is the very condition, and the only condition on which any soul can be saved. And it is the perpetual condition. It is even now, as it was in the beginning. They who once, in contending for the christian steadfastness, resisted unto blood, had not occasion for a more lofty spiritual energy, than have we. To meet the axe, and the fagot, did not require a more invincible resolution and steadfastness than it now does to meet the sharp and fiery trial of virtue.

Why can I not make every hearer see this? Bear with me, if I address many who do see this—bear with me if I speak as to some who see it not. Say, then, thou who art at ease in this matter—say, what is your strongest propensity. Is it to procure wealth? Is it to obtain distinction, such as office, or the fame of tal-

ents will give? Is it the gratification of the senses—is it pleasure? Is it the love of distinction, or the love of gold, or some guiltier desire that stirs, with restless impulse in your bosom? Say which of these has the mastery, or whether all by turns have their hour of ruling?

Well, then, I tell you, that in every path where these impulses carry you, you shall meet, in some form or other of temptation, the dread enemy of your soul. I tell you that the sharp and fiery trial *shall* assail your virtue. I tell you that the occasion shall come—stealing upon you in the disguise of false principles, or rushing upon you in the flood of the passions—when you must be armed with the strength of prayer, when you must strive, resisting as it were unto blood, when you must stand firm and strong in the energies of immortal virtue; or you shall be a lost man! Every hour it may come, at the table of the money changer, and at the table of feasting; at the bright noonday, or in the black night; and if you do not arouse yourself and put on all the might of prayer and faith and vowed fidelity, as certainly as you have a moral nature—as certainly as you are capable of falling into evil, you shall be a sinful being here, and a miserable being hereafter

Work out your salvation, then, for so only can it be gained. Work out your salvation—shall I not say with the Apostles' addition?—work out your salvation with fear and trembling—knowing also, for your encouragement to work, knowing that it is God who worketh in you, that he will not suffer the virtue that is faithful to be too weak for the trial, that he will not suffer the world to gain that soul which is given to him,--knowing that it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED AT CAMBRIDGE

BEFORE

THE SOCIETY OF PHI BETA KAPPA,

AUGUST 26, 1830.

By Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY.

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ORATION.

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

This Society was formed for the promotion, though chiefly by an indirect influence, of a sound and healthful literature. And the use of this anniversary festival, — for I think it has a use, beyond the pleasure that it brings with it, — is to strengthen the bonds of literary duty and friendship; to rekindle the fires which, separate and solitary, are apt to die away; to revive that zeal for study, which is too liable to fail, or to falter at least, in its struggle with professional cares. From the midst of those cares, from the labors of the pulpit, from the toils of the bar, from the watchings of the sick room, from the care of the body politic, from the weariness of the teacher's form, our tribes have come up to pay the annual offering, and keep the yearly jubilee.

What are the principles which, on our return to those fields, will ensure us the most successful cultivation of them? What is the true science, the *rationale*, if I may say so, of thorough improvement and refinement? What are the true means of spreading at once wealth and beauty over the paths of literary labor?

From the wide range of discussion which this question opens to us, I shall select two views, two principles of intellectual culture — (this is my general subject) — the one practical, the other theoretical; both of which derive urgent claims to attention, as I think, from the character of the literature that is prevalent at

the present day, and from the state of our own little republic of letters. My practical principle is, that the loftiest attainments of the mind in every sphere of its exertion, are immediately — much as the original tendency or temperament may vary — are *immediately* the fruit of nothing but the deepest study; that, for instance, the great poet and the great artist, as well as the profound metaphysician or astronomer, is by nothing more distinguished than by this thorough and patient application; that natural genius, as it is called, appears in nothing else, and is nothing else, but the power of application; that there is *no* great excellence without great labor; that the inspirations of the muse are as truly studies, as the lucubrations of philosophy. In other words, it is the deepest soil that yields not only the richest fruits, but the fairest flowers; it is the most solid body which is not only the most useful, but which admits of the highest polish and brilliancy; it is the strongest pinion, which not only can carry the greatest burden, but which soars to the loftiest flight.

That the most intense study is necessary to the loftiest attainments in every department, whether of philosophy or poetry, of science or imagination, of reality or fiction, of judgment or taste, would perhaps be best made to appear, by showing the strict and close connexion there is between them; and that there is such a connexion is indeed my theoretical principle. To some suggestions on these subjects, as all that the present occasion permits, — to some suggestions, I must say, rather than discussions, let me now invite your attention.

My position then, in theory, is, that between these various qualities of mind and departments of literature, of which I have just spoken, there is no incongruity, none of the commonly supposed warfare, but perfect harmony. These extremes, as they are usually considered, do actually meet and mingle in every perfect mind and in every perfect literature. In fact, the most distinguishing trait in all the greatest minds of the world, the preëminent seal of genius upon all its noblest works, has been this union of opposite qualities, of sense and

sprightliness, of philosophy and fancy, of acuteness and invention.

The maxim that "extremes meet," has, indeed, been commonly received, and too often exemplified in a very different sense. The too constant imperfection of our experiments in the science of the mind has nearly overthrown what in theory is the only perfect rule. It is true, that metaphysical speculation, for instance, when it goes to what is called an extreme, when it goes beyond fact, beyond the range of simple induction, runs into transcendental mysticism, and is at war with plain good sense, and tends to chill the fervor of fancy and feeling. The hoary wisdom of learning, too, sometimes verges very nearly upon childish pedantry; the extreme of acuteness sinks, in some instances, into a trifling and petty accuracy about details; and extreme good sense — alas! it is sometimes dull and unmeaning as nonsense. And there is nothing, indeed, that is more sure to become vapid and tedious, than the incessant, even though it be for a time the successful, endeavour to be brilliant and sprightly, — as the agreeable trifling of our foreign Monthlys has, at some periods of their history, strikingly demonstrated. Even Cervantes, and I shall add, our own Knickerbocker, is often, to my mind, but a sorry jester, in the overstrained effort at perpetual wit; — an effort, whose occasional failure, indeed, argues no want of power, since it is as impossible to succeed in it, as it would be to make the lightning, which falls in transient flashes from the cloud, the permanent medium of vision.

But what follows from these instances in the history of the human mind? Does it follow, that, compatible with the nature of these qualities, there can be too much of true wisdom, acuteness, sense, sprightliness, or wit? Never. The truth is, that these things become other things when they go too far — when, in the bad sense, they go to extremes. The maxim, in this sense, like all false paradoxes, keeps its meaning only to the ear, and breaks it to the judgment.

It may be said, indeed, with sufficient accuracy, perhaps, for common parlance, and when speaking of common men, that such an one is a man of strong sense, but has not a particle of imagination; that another dwells in a world of fiction and knows nothing of reality, is a poet and knows nothing of human nature; and some harmless people may harmlessly imagine that the grand mark of intellectual distinction is maudlin sentiment and visionary nonsense; but in the severe and high cultivation of the mind it is necessary to set up a different principle. It is necessary to maintain that, in their perfection, the noblest qualities of the mind meet and modify each other. They may go to their utmost extent, they may go to their extremes, yet if they do meet, if they do control each other, if they mingle in perfect harmony, their union presents us, at once, with the strongest and the most beautiful forms of intellectual power. So that the severest sense is not barely compatible but consonant with the richest fancy; so that genuine logic is no enemy to genuine poetry; so that perfect wisdom is identical with perfect beauty.

For the correctness of the principle which I maintain, I appeal now, for a moment, to the philosophy of the mind. The questions to be asked here are very simple, but they are very decisive. What *is* the mind? Is it not one intelligence? And is it not the same intelligence and no other, that is employed in every intellectual effort, and in every department of literature? Is not that intelligence, I still ask, whether it builds up a science or an art, deals with theory or practice, constructs a problem or a poem, one and the same thing? Is not the aliment, by which the mind is to grow, truth, — simple, single, harmonious, divinely accordant truth? And is not the right order in which its faculties are to rise to their highest excellence, that of perfect proportion? And must not all disproportion among its powers indicate an imperfect and crude developement? Furthermore, is there any clashing among the natural powers of the mind? Is there to be found, in fact, on an accurate analysis, any of the commonly supposed incongruity between rea-

son and fancy, between the judgment and the imagination? What is reason? It is usually defined to be the power of comparing our ideas, and of discriminating their resemblances and differences. What is the imagination? It is the power of calling up at will, and assembling congruous ideas, so as to form harmonious pictures. These powers, then, do not exist in a state of war, but of perfect alliance with each other. They are mutually necessary to each other's strength and perfection. Fancy without judgment is extravagance and folly. Judgment without fancy is unproductive drudgery. It may be correct as far as it goes; but without any of that power called fancy, without any new or extensive combinations of thought, without any capability of stirring from the field of observation immediately before it, the judgment does not go far. In the habit that still prevails of regarding the mind as if it were divided into distinct departments, thought and feeling are constantly distinguished as if they were opposite powers. But what is feeling? It is an emotion arising from the perception of some object, arising, that is, from, or rather with, some thought. Feeling, then, so far from being opposed to thinking, is oftentimes but a more vivid and intense thinking; and Pythagoras, when he demonstrated the Forty-seventh proposition and offered his hecatomb in thanksgiving for that discovery, no doubt *felt* as strongly as Homer, when he described the wrath of Achilles or the tears of Andromache. Different minds possess indeed different capacities, both of thought and feeling; but with this qualification, and speaking as I now do, not of animal sensations, but of intellectual states of mind, I say, that the strong feeling is the strong thought.

These views, simple as they may seem, form the best argument, perhaps, against the commonly supposed incongruity of the different efforts and productions of the mind, and therefore I have been willing to bring them forward at the risk of wearying my audience with scholastic statements. The actual results in literature seem to me to correspond with these acknowledged elements of our philosophy. Supposing a certain

amount of talent, an amount sufficient to stand in the trial for literary distinction; and then I say, that the reason of failure is always to be found in the want, either of the due proportion, or of the due exertion, of the faculties of the mind. The whole history of literature bears me out in this position. How many poems, for instance, charged and overcharged with imagination, have fallen into worse than the hated and fatal mediocrity, for the want of a sound judgment! How many treatises, on the contrary, laden and weighed down with good sense, and much learning too, have sunk to oblivion, because there was no kindling warmth of imagination to buoy them up and bear them on to after ages! And in the few works that have secured the consenting homage of all countries and of all times, what a singular union has there been of the severest sense with the most brilliant fancy! The very idea, that these are warring principles, shows, that in general they have not been well and rightly developed. No doubt the imagination may be cultivated and perhaps strengthened at the expense of the judgment, but then it is not well cultivated. And we see the judgment, in certain instances, acquiring vigor at the expense of the imagination. It is said to be so, at times, in the pursuits of the law, and of the mathematics. But, then, I shall venture to aver that, for the whole man, the judgment is not well cultivated. If such cultivation is a sacrifice, on the part of the individual, to the advancement of the particular science he studies, that is the most that can be said of it. But even then, it is not a necessary sacrifice, as there are many illustrious instances to show. And so far from believing that any of these principles are bestowed, as natural endowments, to the exclusion of others, I undertake to say, that wherever there is a powerful imagination, there, with proper culture, might be a powerful judgment, and the contrary; and that wherever there is strong feeling, there might be strong thinking. There it *is*, for the moment. The strong feeling implies a vivid perception of its object. And the perception that is vivid for a moment, may, by sufficient care, become habitually keen, discriminating,

strong, and comprehensive. In truth, it is not the fanatic, in religion or in literature, that feels the most strongly. The true feeling, as well as the true judgment, is deep, calm, sustained, and thus powerful.

If all this is true, we are prepared to judge what connexion there is between philosophy and poetry, between judgment and taste, between profound thought and a fine imagination. This connexion, did the time permit, is capable of other illustrations from the philosophy of the mind. For it might be shown, that those departments of literature, which have now been named, are not only co-ordinate and harmonious, but that each imparts a distinct and signal power over the other. It might be shown, and indeed it must be obvious, that he who understands the philosophy of the mind, is, for that reason, better prepared to address the mind; that he who understands the philosophy of poetry, of its subjects, of its machinery, its figures, its appropriate thoughts and feelings, will possess advantages in that knowledge; that *his* taste, too, will be better, who has studied its principles; that his fiction will be better, who is most familiar with reality. It is true, that a man, without these aids, may blunder into the right path; or he may be carried into it by the strong impulse of genius, by a philosophy, in fact, which he has not analyzed. For the guidance here is not instinct; that is heaven's guidance and is always safe. While the whole history of criticism shows, that genius, even of the noblest order, has always been committing the most deplorable errors for the want of knowledge.

If, Gentlemen, I am stating new doctrines, I may be permitted, at least, to desire that they be not misunderstood. I do not deny, that in different individuals the various faculties of the mind exist in great disproportion to each other, that in some the imagination is stronger than the judgment, and that in others, the reverse is manifest; but I do deny the *necessity* of any such disproportion, and maintain, that the greatest failures of really lofty talent have arisen from this very incongruity. I do not deny, that different writers, and

more especially in the present state of intellectual cultivation, are particularly qualified for different departments of literary labor; but I maintain, that to the perfection of each of these departments all the faculties must harmoniously contribute; that poetry as truly requires judgment as imagination; and that philosophy as truly requires imagination as judgment. I scarcely need except, indeed, the Mathematics; product of pure reason as it is commonly thought to be. It would have failed of many of its interesting applications; it would have stopt short of its boundless range amidst the pathways of heaven, but for the prompting and guidance of imagination. I say, therefore, that for rearing up the intellectual man, for raising the noblest forms of intellectual production, every faculty of the soul must do its part; and not only so, but that every power must labor; that fancy is a working faculty as truly as reason.

This indeed is the practical principle which I have already stated, and which I shall now undertake to defend. The denial of it has commonly appeared in the form which my language has just implied; in the exemption, that is to say, of certain powers, such as fancy, taste, genius, &c., from the necessity of study. No popular error in literature, I conceive, is deeper or more injurious than this. To counteract this — to show the universal necessity of study, of a thorough and patient application of mind, in every department of literature — to bring all the intellectual faculties under the one grand condition of *improving by exercise*, I have thought it not irrelevant to insist, briefly as I have, on the congruity which exists among them all. Let me not, however, be understood to say, for I do not and shall not say, that study, formal study, can compensate for all defects of original genius, or that there are no differences of natural endowment, for they certainly are great; but this I maintain, that, let the original power be what it may, without strong and fixed application, formal or informal, seen or unseen, with books or without them, that power can produce nothing

that will live, or is worthy to live. Indeed I might say, that without such study there is neither fruit nor evidence of high natural endowment. I will only further premise, that in my remarks on the value and importance of study, I shall solicit your indulgence to a pretty free range of topics, and that I shall occupy the passing hour, not so much with an abstract discussion of the principle I contend for, as with strictures on some of those circumstances of our intellectual condition, and some of those opinions in the literary world, which are unfriendly to severe and thorough mental culture and application.

From that fair proportion of the mind, of which I have spoken, from the severe old models of united strength and grace, and more than all, from the study necessary to the imitation of them, I apprehend, it is the tendency of much of our modern literature, as well as of many maxims among us, to depart. And the peculiar situation of scholars in this country, or of those who should be scholars, is lending its aid to the same result. I ventured to say, of those who should be scholars; for the truth is, that we are, so many of us, men of business and men of action, rather than of study, and there is as yet so little division of intellectual labor among us, that superficial acquisitions, and vague pursuits, and negligent habits of mind, are our greatest dangers.

But I must undertake more particularly to point out some of the causes that are leading to this result; that are leading many, certainly, to a neglect of hard study, and to a disproportioned and defective culture of the mind. As one of these causes, I was speaking of the general tendencies of our modern literature.

It is often said, that the present age is characterized by a strong thirst for excitement. Is it a craving for excitement, — or is it that somewhat less respectable characteristic, a craving for entertainment, that marks the age? There is no occasion, however, to set them up as rival passions; being, as they doubtless are, but different degrees of the same passion. They are not stronger, probably, than they have always been, among

nations of the European stock; than they were amidst "the fierce democracy" of Greece, the stern Roman delight in gladiatorial shows, or amidst the chivalry of the middle ages. But the observation, which is of importance, is this, that while the world is becoming more civilized, more intellectual, and more addicted to peaceful pursuits, both of these passions, the thirst for excitement and the thirst for entertainment, are making demands upon literature, such as they have never made at any former period. The spread of education is bringing forward a host of readers; the art of printing is providing them with books; and the gradual disuse of public sports and spectacles, the decline of fêtes and tournaments, the departure from the public eye of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," are carrying home the want of entertainment to millions of peaceful fire-sides.

This state of things is creating a new era in literature. Books, to an extent before unprecedented, are becoming luxuries; and these luxuries are having the usual effect when substituted in the place of substantial food; they are making men effeminate; they are making effeminate scholars. It is true, that many of the great productions of antiquity were designed for the people; but few of them for their entertainment; and none, that I remember, for the idle or weary hours of domestic relaxation. They were designed for the people; but still for the assembled people, for the eager throng of the forum, of the Centuries, of the Olympic games, or of the theatre; and the theatre too, it is to be remembered, was a school of far severer morals and more pointed satire, than our own. In one form or another, the great public was ever before the eyes of the ancient popular writers. What they wrote for the people at all, was designed for popular, not for private use. And, inspired as their productions were by this stirring sense of general interests, and by the anticipated and immediate verdict, upon their claims, of great assemblies, they are of a character not to enervate, but to arouse and strengthen the mind of the reader. Literature, in modern times, is domesticated. It is

converted, indeed, to a most important use; but it is passing too, by the ordinary process of refinement, from use to luxury.

The immediate effects of that great change, which the spread of education and the developement of new social wants are creating, of that change which has substituted a reading for a hearing public, and the lounger at the fire-side for the agitated assembly; the immediate effects, I say, are sufficiently obvious. The remote consequences may not be so obvious, but they are no less certain.

The first effect is to lower the style of literary composition, and to render the standard more vague and uncertain. The style is to be read. It may, therefore, be negligent and irregular at less hazard. The sentence that is not clear, on the first reading, may be read again; and if, as is not uncommon, it requires a third reading, the author is not present to receive the salutary tokens of the displeasure or vexation he causes. The standard, too, becomes vague from the extension and variety of the audience to be addressed. There is no *one public*, of grave Romans or acute Athenians, where an author's rivals were ready to note him, and the common people were critics; but his style takes its chance for praise or censure among all the reading families of an empire. Hence, if it is not, in fact, more difficult to tell what good English is, than to decide the same point in the ancient languages, it is at any rate more difficult to check the aberrations of literary pretension and vanity.

The next effect of the change which has taken place in the intellectual and social condition of the world, is the prodigious multiplication of books of entertainment, for the people. We are deluged with works of this class; and the passing tide bears us, every day, not only new productions, but new forms of literary production. It would be a serious task to master even the literature of the Annuals. Meanwhile periodical publications crowd upon us, keeping pace with every division of time but hours and minutes, (for even the newspapers grow learn-

ed,) filling all the spaces not occupied by larger trifles, and covering, with grievous and pertinacious disorder and disarray, the tables that, fifty years ago, were pressed only by goodly quartos, or reverend folios. Seriously ; it is impossible to keep up with the literature of the day, without losing sight of things far more important. Professional duties *must* be attended to ; and these discharged, the contest lies, with many, between sound learning and trifling entertainment.

And here is found the worst effect of all, of the state of modern literature ; more remote, as I have said, but not less certain. For it is not to be doubted, that many fail in that contest, that many, who might and should be sound scholars, become mere men of taste, and of very superficial taste, too, for the want of severe study and of thorough and philosophical habits of mind. If I do not very much mistake the literary signs of the times, this is not a matter of mere groundless apprehension. It is not only true, that the mighty folios of former days have gone out of fashion, but I venture to think, that books and essays of the most moderate dimensions, that require profound attention, stand less chance in the competition with lighter works, than they once did.

It shall be allowed that there have been great temptations. The muse of fiction, it is true, has laid aside some of her enchantments and sorceries ; but she has clothed herself in the sober livery of history, and no one fears her ; she has clothed herself with immortal genius and beauty, and no one can resist her. She has become no less powerful, and far more wise. It is this that has carried the works of the mighty Magician, and with them a multitude of humbler friends, into universal society. For that master-spirit has proved himself a magician, in a wider sense than that of having enchanted his individual readers ; he has given a bias to the whole reading of the age. The novel-reading of former days was, comparatively, a lady's luxury ; it is now the business of men ; it is one of the great employments of society ; it is invading the department of the scholar's labors. The novel is no longer "a book of the bou-

doir," but it is a book of the study. That long and lengthening series of volumes in our libraries, marked Waverley, though it may be high up in the pile, threatens insecurity to the whole fabric.

This influence of the literature of the day to beguile us from deep study and profound thought, is not left to operate by itself; but we have sundry clever and convenient maxims to help it on. The prevailing ideas of originality of thought, of imagination, of poetry, of eloquence, of fine writing, and of study itself lean, as I think, to this injurious result.

I say, in the first place, of study itself — of the very business of mental culture. And speaking on this point and going to the primary deficiency, I venture to question, whether the very ideas of intellectual improvement, even among thinking men, do not fall farther short of the thoroughness and consistency of a real system and science than any other ideas that prevail among us. I put it to the scholars who hear me, with all deference, how far they have settled within themselves, the plan, so to speak, of what they will be, or will attempt — nay, whether, in fact, the indistinct conceptions which are commonly entertained are not as wavering and fluctuating, as they are ill defined. The idea of a perfect man, upon which Cicero so often and eloquently discourses, under the name of the orator, seems scarcely to have any place among our modern speculations. He was to be not a philosopher only, not a mathematician, nor a student of history, nor an amateur in the arts, nor a poet, nor a good man, (yea, and a pious man,) only; but he was to be all of them in one; and so trained in all his faculties, that when he put forth their united effort, that effort should be expressed by nothing but the Demosthenic word, action — concentrated, intense, all-powerful action!

It may be said that the extent of modern science, and the multiplicity of its details, absolutely require a division of intellectual labor, inconsistent with Cicero's description of a perfect man. I am not about to enter upon the discussion of a topic so extensive. But this at least may be said, that there

are living instances of all that extent and variety of attainment which his description requires — instances, too, in which all this, instead of distracting or diverting the mind, contributes in fact to its pre-eminence in some one department; and this, for all professional men, at least, is the true division of intellectual labor.

But not to dwell upon this point, concerning which perhaps it does not become me to pronounce; it may be questioned, whether the most thorough and powerful principles are yet fairly, and prominently enough, introduced into our systems for improving the mind. I say nothing of studying sixteen hours a day; sixteen hours a day! for fifty years, and then finding a fresh and vigorous old age: an achievement to be looked for in the moon — or in Germany! I say nothing of the vaunted practical spirit of the age, whose wisdom seems to consist in overlooking all necessary means, all previous training, to spring to the end. I say nothing of the imperfect courses of education with which many of our youth are obliged to be content, or to which at least they are obliged to confine themselves. But what are the grand impulses and projects offered to those who have the best opportunities? We are laboring hard at the mind; and the main lever — I should not complain if it were only an auxiliary power — but the main lever with which we are striving to raise it up is ambition, and ambition, too, for immediate display and distinction. This is the grand principle in almost all our schools. We are working with this convenient and ready, but comparatively gross and clumsy instrument, rather than inspiring the soul with those principles and bringing forth from within it that developement by which it will rise, irresistibly rise of itself. With the Greek and Roman systems of moral teaching, ambition was the only principle, perhaps, that could be relied on. But with our systems, with the simple and sublime precepts of Christianity, with the solemn revelation of a future life, that pours contempt upon all human pride, the selfish love of distinction, in all noble minds, is deprived of more than half its vigor; and when the whole weight is leaned

upon it, it is found to be a reed, that is constantly wavering and swaying beneath us.

Observe, also, how cautiously religion, the strongest impulse in the human soul, is excluded from the paths of our literature; how little our literary men have been taught to draw from that deepest fountain of human nature; how little our scholars, those minds that should bear the brightest impress of the Divinity — how little they have felt themselves, as scholars, to have any thing to do with religion. Observe how staid and precise an air it has worn, when it has entered one of our literary Reviews; not Puritanism was ever more precise; it has been a scholastic dignitary, or a fine gentleman, decent, decorous, superficial, cold. Thus, too, has it passed through almost the entire range of our classic English literature. Even of Addison, Soame Jenyns has somewhere said, with too much justice, that he seemed to regard the Supreme Being with an awe as vague and indefinite, as that with which a child gazes upon the mighty elephant. Even our great Moralist, as it has been said, when Mr. Boswell urged upon him some of the deeper and more anxious questionings of the human heart on the subject of religion, had nothing to say, but, "My dear Sir, keep your mind free from cant." We may not say, perhaps, that our literature is singularly irreligious; but it certainly is, taken as a body, singularly deficient in the depth and power that belong to that sentiment.

I cannot altogether join in a similar charge, which is now somewhat familiarly brought against our intellectual philosophy. I should be glad, at least, to *understand* Kant and Coleridge, before I can agree to it. I should be glad to understand that some of their language has any meaning, or any that answers to the mystical depths of their phraseology. And, indeed, so much of simple and of glorious truth do I find in the transcendental school, that it would be far easier to be reconciled to its doctrines, than to the absurd language in which their advocates have seen fit to clothe them.

But, after all, what chance there is for a thorough philosophy, in the tendencies of our English literature at the present day, is a doubtful point. The good old times, when men sat down amidst comparatively few books to think for themselves, seem to be giving place to days of multifarious and monstrous reading. I look in vain in England for patient thinkers like Bacon, and Locke, and Tucker and Reid; and I know not precisely where we are to look among ourselves, for men like Edwards and his school of metaphysical divines.

Indeed, in almost every department, there is too little of that patient and thorough cultivation, which measures years in its plan, before it proposes to come to its finished result. It is a striking remark of Dégérando, that the "extraordinary most generally have sacrificed some condition essential to future progress." It is worth the consideration of eminent men, how far their distinction may be procured at this sacrifice, or may be liable to bring about this result in the progress of their future being — how far the cultivation of some powers, may have been carried on to the neglect of others, or of their whole intellectual and moral nature. Be this as it may, and it is not necessary as I have undertaken to show, — it is certain that in the youthful student, a diseased and superficial ambition, eager for display, anxious to be known, panting for distinction rather than for excellence, seeking for manifestation rather than for developement, urging itself, — not urged from within, — but urging itself on, with a premature and feverish excitement; that such an ambition, I say, *is* making fatal sacrifices of future merit, and distinction also, to present notoriety. It is painful to see the disposition of so large a portion of the early and promising talent among us, to rely upon its present attainments or its hasty efforts, to rely upon the ready coin which it bears about with it, rather than patiently to cultivate the deep mine within; and were it not for the salutary admonition afforded us, it would be yet more painful to behold its brief, spendthrift career, and final poverty.

In short, the very first article, in a sound literary creed, is but half believed among us; and this skepticism vitiates all our faith. We believe in genius, and eloquence, and poetry; we believe in glorious thoughts, and intellectual inspirations, and visions of beauty; but we do not believe in — STUDY; and we do but half believe in truth. "Truth!" says the skeptic sage, "it is a very dangerous thing." "Truth!" says the small, practical philosopher, "what is truth good for, if it will not give us a warmer hearth, or a more plentiful board?" In short, utility, we are told, is taking such a lead in the affairs of mankind, that the world must grow intellectually dull, tame, and spiritless; it is getting to be too cultivated for poetry, too comfortable for eloquence, too busy for literature, and too sharp-sighted for faith. All its nobler productions, it is said, must decline amidst this grand modern improvement; and the world must henceforth be governed, not by mind, but by machinery; it is no longer to seek for truth, — painful toil! but for comfort. Whatever will promote this, — sciences or arts, governments or manufactories, rail-ways or books, no matter what, that tends to this result, is to engross the future attention of mankind.

"We run, alas! after truth," said Voltaire long ago, "ah! believe me, error has its value." That is the real and infidel text, from which all this fine doctrine is derived; for the old French philosophy was as infidel with regard to what is human, as with regard to what is divine. And even Mr. Burke may be quoted for the observation, that "the pleasures of the imagination are much higher than any which are derived from a rectitude of the judgment," as if the two qualities were inconsistent with each other. And we have the proverbial authority of Dr. Johnson for the declaration (I do not undertake to give his words), that all eloquence is founded on extravagance. And a lady, who has risen to the dignity of being the author of forty volumes, has, not long since, told us, that, for her own sex at least, intuition is better than reasoning. And our poets have ever been singing of the charm and

rapture of youthful fancy; leaving it to be inferred, that riper years and sounder judgment must chill and quench its fervors, instead of guiding them upward to an increasing, steady, noontide strength and splendor. And our philosophers have decided, that the favored age of poetry is the youth of the world; as if the poems of Homer *could* have been the production of a rude and undisciplined mind.

But let us collect some of these maxims, that have long, with undefined shape and uncertain tendency, been floating about in the world, and put them in some form, and place them directly before us. Let us examine some of those qualities and efforts of mind which are commonly thought to be, less than any others, the fruit of patient study. The instances, which every one's reflection will at once present us with, are such as poetry, eloquence, the walks of fiction, and especially such as originality of mind, and native genius. These forms and features of literary talent, I shall have occasion to touch in but a single point; and although it were easy, no doubt, to make each of them, even on this point, the subject of extensive discussion, it will not be necessary, perhaps, to my argument; it must, at any rate, on this occasion be dispensed with.

What, then, is poetry? The common answer would be, that it is some peculiar gift, some intellectual effluence, distinct, not merely in form, not merely in rhythm, but essentially and in its very nature distinct from all prose writings. Its numbers are mystic numbers; its themes are far above us, and away from us, in the clouds, or in the hues of the distant landscape; it is at war with the realities of life, and it is especially afraid of logic. It is using no extravagant language, it is committing no vulgar mistake to say, that poetry is regarded as a kind of "peculiar trade and mystery," nay in a sense beyond that of this technical language, as a real and absolute mystery. In one of the most distinguished journals of the day, we find a writer complaining after this sort. "Poetry," says he, "the workings of genius itself, which, in all times, and with one or another meaning, has been called inspiration and held to be

mysterious and inscrutable, is no longer without its scientific exposition." * And why, let us ask, why should it be without its exposition? — ay, and if there were any such thing as a science of criticism among us (for the truth is, there is a great deal less of it than there was in the days of Addison and Johnson), I would say its *scientific* exposition? What *is* poetry? What is this mysterious thing, but one form in which human nature expresses itself? What is it but embodying, what is it but "showing up," in all its moods, from the lowliest to the loftiest, the same deep and impassioned, but universal mind, which is alike and equally the theme of philosophy? What does poetry tell us, but that which was already in our own hearts? What are all its intermingled lights and shadows; what are its gorgeous clouds of imagery, and the hues of its distant landscapes; what are its bright and blessed visions, and its dark pictures of sorrow and passion, but the varied reflection of the beautiful and holy, and yet overshadowed, and marred, and afflicted nature within us? And how then is poetry any more inscrutable than our own hearts are inscrutable! To whom or to what, let us ask again, does poetry address itself? To what, in its heroic ballads, in its epic song, in its humbler verse, in its strains of love, or pity, or indignation, — to what does it speak, but to human nature, but to the common mind of all the world? And its noblest productions, its Iliads, its Hamlets and Lears, the whole world has understood, — the rude and the refined, the anchorite and the throng of men. There *is* poetry in real life, and in the humblest life; and in this, if it may not misbecome me to say so, is one of the noblest of our English poets right; though in the application of his theory, I would venture to assert, with the same reservation for my modesty, that he has sometimes made the most lamentable, not to say ludicrous mistakes. There *is* "unwritten poetry"; there is poetry in prose; there is poetry in all living hearts.

Let him be the true poet who shall find it, sympathize with it, and bring it to light. He that does so must deeply study

* Edinburgh Review.

human nature. He that does so, must, whether he knows it or not, be a philosopher. Much there is, no doubt, of technical language, much about quiddities and entities, much of the endless refinements upon the *universal a parte rei*, that he may not know. But he must know, and that by deep study and observation, how feelings and passions rise in the human breast, what are those which coexist, what repel each other, what naturally spring one from another; he must know what within is moved, and how it is put in action by all this moving world around us; what chords are struck, not only by the rough touches of fortune, but what are swept by invisible influences; he must know all the wants, and sufferings, and joys of this inward being, what are its darkest struggles, its sublimest tendencies, its most soothing hopes, and most blessed affections; and all this is divine philosophy. He must wait almost in prayer at the oracle within; he must write the very language of his own soul; he must write no rash response from the shrines of idolized models; but asking, questioning, listening to the voice within as he writes; and then will the deepest philosophy take the form of the noblest inspiration.

And what more does the eloquent man, let us ask again, what more does he, than express that which, in greater or less power, is within us all? He creates nothing. He is but an interpreter of what God has created within us. He only gives it language. In the old Puritan phrase, as true in philosophy as in religion, he is "but an instrument." He but unlocks the sources of feeling, and it flows of itself. And the key which is to open for him a way to the hearts of others, is a profound study, a deep knowledge, an exquisite sense of what is in his own heart.

And what is fiction? — for I find that I must not dwell upon these instances, — what is fiction, but assembling in various combinations the traits of real life? Nor do all the efforts of imagination ever go beyond the simple reality. Nor can all the tales of imaginary distress or joy ever equal what takes place in the dwellings of human affection. The tones of

rapturous or agonized human sympathy, tenderness, love, pity, the gentle voices of kindness that echo from the familiar hearth-stone, the accents in which a mother speaks to her sick and suffering child, surpass all that fancy can imagine, or the stage exhibit. And no fictitious heroism is more noble than that which swells many a heart, in the secret and solitary strife of virtue. And all the sentimental descriptions in the world are but cold rhapsody, in comparison with what is actually witnessed and felt in the daily communion of heart with heart.

The argument which, in pursuance of my design, I might draw from these observations, is evident. By laying the foundation of poetry, eloquence, and fiction, in human nature, I say, that they are brought within the range of the strictest philosophy, and that they demand the most thorough and philosophical study.

While I thus refer again to the argument I am pursuing, I will advert, in passing, to the common objection. It is said, that study often has the effect to chill the sensibility and enthusiasm necessary to success in these lofty arts, or that it leads to those fine discriminations of thought, which take proportionably from its strong and bold outline and coloring. The answer is, that the study which produces this effect is not of the right kind, that it is not healthful to the mind, nor in the highest degree thorough, sound, and discriminating in itself, that it certainly is not properly adapted to its end, that, with reference to its end, it certainly is not philosophical. No doubt there are instances in which the poetic fire is chilled by metaphysical abstraction. There are those who have become less eloquent writers for being more refined thinkers, and others who have become less eloquent speakers in the study to improve. But in every such instance, I contend, that the study is not sound, and wise, and well applied. I cannot admit, that the mystical and misty speculations of Mr. Coleridge, with however much of noble thought and deep penetration they discover, are any exception to the remark. I cannot admit, that he is any the better philosopher for being the worse,

if he *is* the worse, poet. The essayist, Foster, is a remarkable example of an eloquent writer sinking, as he has done, in his later productions, under the weight of tedious and perplexed sentences, from too much refinement of thought. His brain has spun the matter of his late discussions so thick and fine with qualifications, that his own manly sense is scarcely able to break through them; and his reader is wearied with pursuing out, first one line of qualification and then another, till he loses the main thread of the discourse. But, then, I maintain that the same acuteness, which led him to perceive the innumerable discriminations into which thought branches out, should have led him in popular discourse, to cut off those smaller limbs which detract alike from the strength, beauty, and distinctness of the picture. What we have to require of such writers is, not that they should think less, but they should think more. We demand an effort beyond that of philosophizing, — the effort of communication; an effort which is declared by Dr. Brown to be the very end of "a judicious logic." And in order to the success of this effort, we demand the study, the strong and vivid perception, that emblazons its main thought, on every page, with a brightness that extinguishes every inferior light.

The case of those writers, and it is not rare, who, from the time of their first successful production, fall ever after into a lower and poorer style, will not be thought to offer any objection. The deterioration arises precisely from want of study, from self-confidence and carelessness, from poverty of thought in many cases, and in some, from the vanity, in the writers, of supposing, that it was the charm of their peculiarities, and not the claim of their general merits, that had attracted the public notice.

The same general remarks apply to the labors for improvement of the public speaker. There is one common observation on this subject, however, which is often made with great confidence, and as a triumphant argument against study, to which I shall not reply as an objection, because I entirely con-

trovert its truth. It is said that some of our most eloquent speakers are native orators, and have never studied their productions at all, with reference to delivery. This I deny; for one of the most important departments of rhetorical study is left out of this statement. I mean what rhetoricians call the "silent study" of a piece, — in which the celebrated Siddons is said so much to have exercised herself, — and which, however unconsciously, I am as certain that eloquent speakers have used, as I am that the painter has studied the picture on his canvass. Or, if it be said that they often speak extemporaneously, then I say, that there has been the most powerful action of the mind at the moment, in thinking and speaking justly.

But to refer to the common rhetorical exercises; I maintain, that study fails here, if at all, from the want of thoroughness, patience, or good sense, — fails especially because it is not study enough. The orator is thinking too much of his art perhaps, is thinking of principles and rules and criticisms, at the very moment when he attempts to exchange his art for action. But what is the inference? Not that philosophy and practice prevent success; not that they are useless; but that he does not know how to use them; that he has not used them enough. He is not familiar with them. He is encumbered by that which might aid him. He is intimidated, in fact, by the *armour* which he has not learnt to wield. He is like the raw recruit, who is all the while thinking what terrible weapons he is using, and what fearful passes he makes. We would have the soldier certainly taught the art of fence; but if he were constantly thinking of its rules and principles, if his head were filled with his books and his practice, as he went into the battle, he would of course fight timidly and awkwardly; his philosophy, so to call it, — his superficial accomplishment, that is to say, — would be a bad thing for him. But then, again, the inference would be, not that the art of fence is a bad thing, but that he is badly or imperfectly instructed in it.

There is a great deal of real study, of real philosophy, in fact, without the name, and without even the consciousness of it. And I undertake to say, as to mere style, that, in the composition of a single paragraph of a high order and of any great beauty, though the writer may be insensible of it, there is as keen and careful a selection and discrimination of thoughts, as exact a proportion of one thing to another, as decisive and determinate a rejection of every thought that would interfere with the whole effect, as there is judgment or taste in the construction of a fine building, or in the delineation of a splendid picture. The process, the art, the writer may not be perceived, or even thought of, by the reader. So neither in the full impression of architectural or pictorial beauty, do we think of the artist. Yet, in either case, the judgment and the taste are there, and have labored hard at their finished work.

And although the talent employed may possess the almost mystic charm which is usually expressed by the phrase, original talent, yet it is only the more true that it must labor for its distinction. What is true originality of thought but that thorough and painful elaboration of ideas, which gives them the peculiar cast and character of the mind they pass through? The original mind is but the crucible in which old and well known materials are transmuted into new forms; and it is not a flash or a gleam that gives the result, but the trial of fire! The scripture declaration applies here more truly than any where else, since it applies to the permanent intellectual nature of man, that "there is nothing new under the sun." Even the vaunted modern systems of metaphysical philosophy, if we may believe Professor Cousin, are but reproductions of the old: and the world, after its long sleep in the night of the Middle Ages, is but just coming up with Plato and Aristotle. To make new and superior fabrics out of common materials, must be a work of labor. Singularity, eccentricity, may be the natural and mushroom products of a shallow and barren soil; but originality is a plant of another and different growth. The man who thinks for him-

self, who thinks differently from other men, and pays their opinions the respect to compare them with his own, who strikes out new paths of reflection and investigates them — the original thinker, in other words, deserving the name, must think deeply and patiently. He is bound to do this, beyond all men, and if he is faithful to his own mind he will do it. It may be doubted indeed, whether much that passes for originality is not some novel and really indefensible modification of thought, which the author of it labors hard and ingeniously to clothe in such forms as not to shock the general judgment. But even this, the lowest and most doubtful form of original thought, is any thing, it is apparent, but the result of hasty impulses and suggestions.

As the most illustrious example of true originality, of the almost mysterious developement of great native powers, Shakspeare is constantly quoted. He is called the child of nature. His works pass with us for a sort of inspiration. Our ignorance of this wonderful being, of whom nearly all that can be said is in the words of a critic, that "after having written his thirty-eight plays, he went carelessly down to the country, and lived out his days, apparently unconscious of having done any thing at all extraordinary;" — this mystery, which shrouds the circumstances of his life, helps to spread over his immortal productions an air, not of effort, but of enchantment. Into that deep and silent world of thoughts and passions, the mind of Shakspeare, well shadowed forth by the outward silence of history, few men have sent any searching analysis; few can. There is enough, indeed, of verbal annotation and small criticism upon his works in his native tongue. And German critics have written of him, in language of unbounded admiration, often bordering on rhapsody, and yet of much deep sympathy with him too; but the philosophy of Shakspeare's genius is yet to be studied.* Yet who can doubt that that world of his secret

* It is scarcely necessary to except from this remark the Lectures of A. W. Schlegel; though of all the writers on Shakspeare, he would be most justly designated, perhaps, as the man to execute this noble task.

thoughts was a world of labor? Who can doubt that to him who lingered in some humble employment about the theatre, the great globe itself was a stage, and that all men passed before him as actors; that he saw them as they passed as none other had seen them — saw through every disguise, the mean man and the mighty, the dark, the fierce, the passionate, the meek, the lovely, the sorrowful, the rejoicing — sympathized with all — studied all — revolved in his own bosom all human thought, feeling, passion, desire, till they came forth the living beings of his own mind, and destined to live in the admiration and delight of men for ever.

As a further and final example of the point I have labored to establish, let me refer to that undefined and much misapprehended quality, called genius.

The favorite idea of a genius among us, is of one who never studies, or who studies, nobody can tell when — at midnight, or at odd times and intervals — and now and then strikes out, *at a heat*, as the phrase is, some wonderful production. This is a character that has figured largely in the history of our literature, in the person of our Fieldings, our Savages, and our Steeles – "loose fellows about town," or loungers in the country, who slept in ale-houses and wrote in bar-rooms, who took up the pen as a magician's wand to supply their wants, and when the pressure of necessity was relieved, resorted again to their carousals. Your real genius is an idle, irregular, vagabond sort of personage, who muses in the fields or dreams by the fire-side; whose strong impulses — that is the cant of it — must needs hurry him into wild irregularities or foolish eccentricity; who abhors order, and can bear no restraint, and eschews all labor: such an one, for instance, as Newton, or Milton! What! they must have been irregular, else they were no geniuses.

"The young man," it is often said, "has genius enough, if he would only study." Now the truth is, as I shall take the liberty to state it, that genius will study, it is that in the mind which does study; that is the very nature of it. I care not to

say that it will always use books. All study is not reading, any more than all reading is study. By study I mean — but let one of the noblest geniuses and hardest students of any age define it for me. "Studium," says Cicero, "est animi assidua et vehemens ad aliquam rem applicata magnâ cum voluntate occupatio, ut philosophiæ, poëticæ, geometriæ, literarum." * Such study, such intense mental action, and nothing else, is genius. And so far as there is any native predisposition about this enviable character of mind, it is a predisposition to that action. That is the only test of the original bias; and he who does not come to that point, though he may have shrewdness, and readiness, and parts, never had a genius. No need to waste regrets upon him, as that he never could be induced to give his attention or study to any thing; he never had that which he is supposed to have lost. For attention it is, though other qualities belong to this transcendent power, — attention it is, that is the very soul of genius: not the fixed eye, not the poring over a book, but the fixed thought. It is, in fact, an action of the mind which is steadily concentrated upon one idea or one series of ideas, — which collects in one point the rays of the soul till they search, penetrate, and fire the whole train of its thoughts. And while the fire burns within, the outward man may indeed be cold, indifferent, negligent, — absent in appearance; he may be an idler, or a wanderer, apparently without aim or intent: but still the fire burns within. And what though "it bursts forth" at length, as has been said, "like volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original, native force?" It only shows the intenser action of the elements beneath. What though it breaks like lightning from the cloud? The electric fire had been collecting in the firmament through many a silent, calm, and clear day. What though the might of genius appears in one decisive blow, struck in some moment of high debate, or at the crisis of a nation's peril? That mighty energy, though it may have heaved in the breast of a Demosthenes, was once

* De Inventione, Lib. I. c. 25.

a feeble infant's thought. A mother's eye watched over its dawning. A father's care guarded its early growth. It soon trod with youthful step the halls of learning, and found other fathers to wake and to watch for it,— even as it finds them here. It went on: but silence was upon its path, and the deep strugglings of the inward soul marked its progress, and the cherishing powers of nature silently ministered to it. The elements around breathed upon it and "touched it to finer issues." The golden ray of heaven fell upon it, and ripened its expanding faculties. The slow revolutions of years slowly added to its collected treasures and energies; till in its hour of glory, it stood forth embodied in the form of living, commanding, irresistible eloquence! The world wonders at the manifestation, and says, "Strange, strange that it should come thus unsought, unpremeditated, unprepared!" But the truth is, there is no more a miracle in it, than there is in the towering of the preëminent forest tree, or in the flowing of the mighty and irresistible river, or in the wealth and the waving of the boundless harvest.

Fathers and Guardians of our youthful learning! — behold it here — the germ of all that glorious power, in the strong and generous and manly spirits of the rising youth around you; and say, if you would relinquish an office, so honored, and *so* to be rewarded, for the sceptre of any other dominion. Youthful aspirants after intellectual eminence! — forget, forget, I entreat you; banish, banish for ever, the weak and senseless idea, that any thing will serve your purpose, but study; intense, unwearied, absorbing study; "animi assidua et vehemens occupatio."

I recall one who more than thirty years since trod these hallowed paths of learning, whose life of literary enterprise and labor shows that he had taken that word for his motto. The leisure of his early manhood was devoted to works that have done honor to our youthful literature, and his zeal for letters found a place for similar studies, even amidst the labors of a responsible, and honorable, and well discharged commission abroad, from the government of his country. I need not say

that I allude to the accomplished and lamented Tudor. The distinguished place which he held in our republic of letters, as well as in this association, would justly require of us an apology, not for speaking of him, but for being, on this occasion, silent. As my acquaintance with his character was not personal, I can speak only of those literary projects and productions which certainly entitle him to a respectful and grateful commemoration among us. To die in a foreign land, to die amidst strangers, to die on the eve of a long-desired return to his country, is mournful. But to have performed honorable and honored services for his country; to have left the impress of his mind on its permanent literature; to have left memorials of himself, too, in the still ripening fruits of his intelligent enterprises; to have portrayed, with a discriminating hand, "the living manners as they rise," and well and worthily to have celebrated the glorious dead, and at last, himself to have gone down to the grave amidst the regrets of all who knew him; these are testimonials to literary usefulness and honor, which any man among us might covet, when his own labors also shall come to their end.

How soon they may be brought to it, and how suddenly, Divine Providence has very lately given us a most affecting and solemn intimation. I know that the minds of many who hear me will turn, without hesitation, and not without strong emotion, to our late, distinguished, most honored, — and I give the full force to that word, when I add, — to our beloved Chief Justice! * Speaking as I do in the presence of those who have been his associates and companions through many favored years, I feel that they will not ask of one, who has not enjoyed that happiness, to pronounce his eulogy. Nor needs it to be spoken here; for his praise is in all the borders of this Commonwealth, and it is permanently recorded on one of the brightest pages in the history of its jurisprudence. And yet there is one — apology, shall I call it? — for the admiration and homage of all who knew him. For of no man

* Chief Justice Parker died on the 25th of July last.

could it be more properly said, that his distinction, his honor, his worth were the property of us all; for they shone upon all; they made friends of all; they cheered every one, whether high or low, whether old or young, whom he took by the hand with a simplicity and kindness as honorable to him even as his eminent talents and distinguished learning. Noble and excellent man! now, alas! added to the number of the lamented and venerated! be the path that thou hast trod — the path of labor, of toil, of study, of virtue, of piety, — be it our own path to usefulness and honor!

In the presence of such contemplations, I need not be reminded that further discussion would be improper. Suffice the argument which is supported by such examples; examples more powerful than any words of mine to illustrate and enforce our duty as scholars. Suffice the inducements, when every year's assembling here, with sad commemoration of the departed, solemnly teaches us, that life is short, is shortening; while the field of knowledge spreads before us in bright and boundless prospect. "That which I know," were the dying words of the illustrious La Place, — "that which I know is limited; that which I do not know, is infinite!"

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